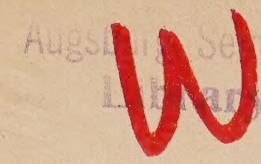
Augsburg College Library
3 0510 00745 7833

Tennyson and Matthew Arnold

Oliver Elton

31E
2/6



TENNYSON AND MATTHEW ARNOLD

BY

OLIVER ELTON

LL.D., D.LITT., F.B.A.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

1924

[*All rights reserved*]

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Butler & Tanner Ltd., *Frome and London*

821.09
T31E

NOTE

These two essays are chapters, revised here for separate issue, from the writer's *Survey of English Literature, 1830–1880*, published in 1920. Chronological tables and brief notes on the literature of the subject are appended.

15 280

VOLUMES IN THIS SERIES

SIR WALTER SCOTT
WORDSWORTH
SHELLEY
TENNYSON AND MATTHEW ARNOLD
THE BROWNINGS
DICKENS AND THACKERAY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
1780–1830
2 *Volumes, Demy 8vo,* 32*s. net*

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
1830–1880
2 *Volumes, Demy 8vo,* 32*s. net*

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

CONTENTS

TENNYSON

CHAP.		PAGE
I	Alfred Tennyson the 'true heir'; position of poetry at the time—Development as an artist up to 1842; instinct to 'pack' his material—Various species of simplicity . . .	7
II	Sketch of his career as a poet—Place therein of the *Poems* of 1842; the central year, 1850, *In Memoriam*; Tennyson's masterpiece *Maud*—Volume of *Enoch Arden*, etc.—Later works; freshness in old age—Record of his reputation	10
III	The antique: Hellenic poems; the dramatic monologue, *Ulysses*, *Tiresias*, etc.; *Lucretius*—Lyrics on classical subjects: *Lines to Virgil*; metrical experiments	15
IV	The English idyll: origins; medley of styles for which blank verse is used; the minimum style—*Enoch Arden* and *The Princess* . .	20
V	Speculative verse, from *The Two Voices* to *The Ancient Sage*—New mastery of philosophical poetry—*In Memoriam*: in arrangement and composition, compared with Shakespeare's *Sonnets*; course of thought in the poem; effect of the metre and its varieties . . .	24
VI	Tennyson's position in the religious speculation of his time; 'right centre'—States of vision; 'the Nameless'; *The Ancient Sage* . .	30
VII	Dramatic monologues: *Lucretius*—*Maud*, its construction, hero, and finale . . .	33
VIII	Arthuriad: *Morte d'Arthur*. *Idylls of the King*; Malory overlaid with symbolism and ornament—Order of production; embarrassments—Tennyson and Morris—Allegory and mysticism	36

CHAP.		PAGE
IX	Lyric; sixty years of production—Pace of the lyrics—Natural and elaborated song	43
X	Dramas; history plays and romantic plays	45
XI	Management of words; use of the *kenning*; observation underlying the felicities—Blank verse—Tennyson's general position	47
XII	Charles Tennyson (Turner): sonnets, themes—Frederick Tennyson	51

MATTHEW ARNOLD

I	Formative influences: Goethe, the Greeks, Wordsworth, the Bible, etc.	54
II	Revolt against romanticism—His purpose, its advantages and penalties; attitude to 'beauty'; formulæ	55
III	Links between his poetry and his criticism—Heroic and dramatic pieces: *Sohrab and Rustum*; *Empedocles on Etna*	58
IV	Elegiacs; 'associative' poems; lyrics; sonnets	61
V	Felicity of nature; his English scenery, and Tennyson's	66
VI	State of criticism, 1830–1850—Keble; Brimley	68
VII	Matthew Arnold's critical canons: need of design in poetry; the test applied—The 'grand style'—*Lectures on Translating Homer*; the question of metre; Sir S. Ferguson quoted—Use of test passages, its drawback.	70
VIII	'Criticism of life'—*Celtic Literature*—First series of *Essays in Criticism*; federal ideal of literature	77
IX	Other criticisms: on Shelley; on Sainte-Beuve	80
X	Religious writings: formulæ, method, and standpoint—Social and educational works	84
XI	Summary	89
	Chronological Tables	91
	Notes	95

TENNYSON

I

Alfred Tennyson the 'true heir'; position of poetry at the time—Development as an artist up to 1842; instinct to 'pack' his material—Various species of simplicity.

The public coronation of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, may be dated in 1850, the year of *In Memoriam* and of the Laureateship. His title had really been established by his volume of 1842; and to ourselves, as to a few observers at the time, it is clearly prophesied in 1830 and 1832. It was natural that Arthur Hallam should write that 'the true heir is found'—the heir to Keats; and Wordsworth, who was hard to please, saluted Tennyson as 'decidedly the first of our living poets.' The greeting of Coleridge, who died too soon to read *Ulysses*, was more dubious, although the young Tennyson was really a poet in his own tradition. But the interregnum had not been long since the death of Byron in 1824, and the competitors were few. Beddoes and Darley had the true gift, but their flights were brief and they were too much entangled with the Elizabethans. Wade, Sir Henry Taylor, and other writers of the transition are now dim. The field was clear for Tennyson, and also for Browning, whose fame was to be much longer delayed.

We think too much of Tennyson as suspiciously

respectable, as the voice of Victorian England, and as somehow breaking with the freer traditions of romance. His more popular work lends some truth to this view; but then we must look at his best work, whether popular or not; at his classical poems, his lyrics, his dramatic monologues, his monodrama, and his early passionate fantasies, if we are to see how close he was to the age of poetry in which he grew up. He inherits most of these forms and carries them further; he does not break with romance. And he also carries on the succession in his allegorical and speculative verse; though here, indeed, the technique is more original than the ideas.

Up to 1842 his development has some likeness to that of Keats. Both poets begin with a passionate absorption in natural beauty—in colours, sounds, and odours; both abound in rich and sometimes confused melodies From such 'fine excess' both of them move away towards the expression of the plain, the grand, and the heroic; away from Spenser (the sleepy Spenser, not the Platonist) towards Homer and Dante. And both of them get to the grand style; they get to it, *fortunati ambo!* in their youth, not too late to preserve intact the full rich capital of their sensibility to things seen and heard; they keep their hold on the words that seem to *be* such things rather than merely to represent them. This capital Tennyson never squandered, though he lived more than thrice as long as Keats. But we cannot compare further; Tennyson becomes a craftsman of another kind; it is not enough to say that his progress is from the luxurious to the heroic.

Perhaps his strongest impulse is to pack his material. From the first he elaborated and condensed. His diction was naturally curious and his rhythm some-

what slow. Then he followed two different paths. He perfected the elaborate style, the many-faceted verse and image, applying it to ever-new purposes—to reflective writing, to impassioned writing, and above all to natural description, in which he is one of the masters. Yet from this style, which is his regular and instinctive one, he also tries to get away; he tries, and with success, to be bare and simple, above all in the utterance of lyrical or heroic emotion. Often enough we come on the false simplicity, or *simplesse*, which critics have censured. But he also commands two kinds of simplicity which are genuine. The first, the commoner one, is noble enough, but it has the air of being striven for—the result of a simplifying process. We find it even in the prize poem *Timbuctoo*:

> and I
> Was left alone on Calpe, and the Moon
> Had fallen from the night, and all was dark!

There is much of this in Tennyson, and it gives great and just pleasure. But the other kind of simplicity seems not to have been striven for at all but to have taken him by the throat; it is natural and passionate speech that is born with its tune. *Tout le reste est littérature!* we exclaim; often splendid literature too, no doubt. You can have the great style, perfect music, even undeniable song, without having what Burns and Heine give us continually, or what Tennyson himself gives us in 'O that 'twere possible!'—the lines that were the seed of *Maud*— or in 'Break, break, break!' or in the first verse of 'Come not, when I am dead,' or in

> The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

When Tennyson writes like this, we may think of the result either as something alien to his natural gift and bestowed on him by the powers from time to time ; or, more truly and handsomely, as his real genius and flame breaking out and overcoming the bent of his talent, which, eminent and delightful as it is, tends to take him away from such utterance and cover it up. He has plenty of primitive instinct ; yet much of his writing is out of keeping with it, and with his natural, recorded talk, and with his leonine side—the side which is just perceptible in his biography, although there the lion may be somewhat overgroomed, with his mane parted in the middle.

II

Sketch of his career as a poet—Place therein of the *Poems* of 1842 ; the central year, 1850, *In Memoriam* ; Tennyson's masterpiece *Maud*—Volume of *Enoch Arden*, etc.—Later works ; freshness in old age—Record of his reputation.

The *Poems by Two Brothers* tell us little about Alfred Tennyson except his reading. The two brothers were in fact three ; the others, to whom I shall return, were Frederick Tennyson and Charles Tennyson, afterwards Tennyson Turner, both of whom had poetic faculty. In *Timbuctoo* the omens are plainer. But in the *Poems* of 1830 there are *Mariana*, *The Dying Swan*, and *The Ballad of Oriana*. Here the lyrical magic and the power of imaginative landscape-painting are already assured. In *Adeline*, *Lilian*, and their companions the effect is often mawkish ; they are too like the female heads, long ago beloved by undergraduates, of the late Frank Miles. But the lines in the *Ode to Memory* on Tennyson's home at Somersby

are another thing: they were 'written very early in life,' and they show the real Tennyson: they portray

> the brook that loves
> To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
> Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
> Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
> In every elbow and turn,
> The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.

In the *Poems* of 1832 the signs of power are abundant. In *The Poet* Tennyson's statelier style had already come in sight; in *A Dream of Fair Women* it has arrived, and it has also arrived (despite the inadequacy of the moral) in *The Palace of Art*. The Greek poems now begin with *Œnone* and *The Lotos-Eaters*; and *Tithonus*, though not printed at the time, belongs to the same period. And the first of the mediæval poems, Malorian only in its names, is there also; Holman Hunt was to draw the *ventus textilis*, as Edgar Allan Poe called it, of *The Lady of Shalott*. In *Fatima* the thirst of Oriental passion is not weakened by any hunt after far-sought phrase. The painful *May Queen* and *The Miller's Daughter* contain, at the worst, admirable description.

Many of these pieces are less known in their earlier shape. Some, like *The Lady of Shalott* and *Œnone*, were freely rewritten. Tennyson corrected all his life with almost invariable tact, and a study of his textual changes is the best clue to his genius. In the *Poems* of 1842 these revisions begin. A number of the old poems are weeded out, some to reappear long after as *Juvenilia*. It is well to have them all, not least *The Kraken*; and the *Supposed Confessions* is an early experiment in the difficult form of the soliloquy. But the new pieces by common consent contain

many of Tennyson's chief titles to honour. The intricate style has now gone far; some of its varieties may be seen in *St. Simeon Stylites*, *Love and Duty*, and *The Two Voices*. There is many an essay in simplicity, not always successful, as *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* and even *Dora* may be thought to show. But in *Morte d'Arthur* and *Ulysses* the simplicity of grandeur, if not without signs of effort, is really attained; and Tennyson shows that he can render a large poetical idea as distinct from a simple mood or emotion. *Sir Galahad*, *St. Agnes*, and *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* counted for much to the 'Pre-Raphaelite' artists, and link them closely with Tennyson. The mobility of his gift is plain if we set all these poems beside *Locksley Hall*, and again beside *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue*. He was now the master of many measures, including one that seemed to mark him out for a great and worthy poetic adventure. But what would he attempt, what would he execute, in his new and peculiar species of blank verse? Where, asked his friends, was his subject?

He at once used his metre, not for a great subject at all, but for a 'medley'; this was *The Princess*. And he had his great subject, in the loss of his friend; although he did not use blank verse for it. *In Memoriam*, the fruit of seventeen years of intermittent labour, was too dispersedly written for complete unity, though it expressed Tennyson's inmost mind and experience. The same year brought him happiness in his long-deferred marriage, and saw him Laureate. Now, like Pope, he could 'live and thrive' by poetry; and his life had not so far been easy at all; but the long remainder of it was hardly to be troubled except by the paper darts of criticism. But

for the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, he produced little more for some years.

Then came *Maud, a Monodrama*, an unpopular triumph. It was not at all what was expected of Tennyson, but none of his longer poems has more of his genius. And he had for years been nursing his Arthuriad, which was to more than appease the public, and which had begun so well, though it had begun at the end, with *Morte d'Arthur*. The *Idylls of the King* appeared at long intervals. Tennyson meant them for his grand contribution to poetry. The rest of his writing, apart from his plays, consists of sheaf after sheaf of poems, many of them brief and few of more than middle length. He went on inventing; he was always finding out new species and new measures, and the old veins were still rich. In the volume named after *Enoch Arden*, that magnified 'English idyll' with a tropical interlude, came *The Northern Farmer*, *The Voyage*, *In the Valley of Cauteretz*; and, in undeservedly small print, the *Experiments* in classic metre and translation. *Lucretius* is the greatest of his dramatic monologues and of his classical poems. In 1875 his dramatic adventures begin with *Queen Mary*; and he continues to revive the 'chronicle play' in *Harold* and *Becket*; and he writes romantic dramas like *The Falcon*, *The Cup*, or *The Foresters*. Most of these pieces were acted, with all possible advantages, and in each of them there is poetry; but it is seldom the right poetry for a play, and hereafter they are more likely to be read than seen.

Tennyson's lyric energy was still fresh and young. In *Ballads and other Poems*, published in his seventy-first year, are to be seen *The Voyage of Maeldune*, and *The Revenge*, and *Rizpah*. In *Tiresias, and other Poems* come the twenty lines *To Virgil*, his poetical

forefather; nor will anything that he wrote live longer. Here too is *The Ancient Sage*, which intimates the settled faith of his later life. There are many sequels, or experiments in familiar kinds, which, like *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, are not always fortunate; the skill is there, but the verse does not stick in the mind as of old. We feel this too in reading *Demeter* or *The Death of Œnone*, but we have to be careful; for at the last Tennyson writes *Crossing the Bar*; and already, at the age of eighty, he has celebrated *The Progress of Spring*, exclaiming that

The groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould.

The truth about Tennyson's contemporary reputation has only lately been cleared up. He had to struggle for his fame, not only in the Thirties but in the Forties, longer and harder than had been supposed. The best judges saw that it was due, but they were seldom the professional critics. The public knew better than the reviewers and bought the books. After 1850 and till his death Tennyson had the suffrages of all but a few. Some of his friends, like Carlyle and Fitzgerald, repined at his lack of a 'subject.' Taine's chapter in his *Histoire de la Littérature anglaise*, though acute and salutary, is deformed by a preconception of the poet's character. As to Tennyson's attitude towards his critics, it is unsafe to say, as was long said, that he altered his text at their instance; but it is true that he took their censures bitterly, and was stung, so it is reported, when 'Apollodorus says that I am not a great poet.' Apollodorus seems at times to have silenced as well as discouraged the poet. But in the long run Tennyson went his own way, and got out, we may well think, all that was in him. To begin, then, with what is surely his best.

III

The antique: Hellenic poems; the dramatic monologue, *Ulysses, Tiresias*, etc.; *Lucretius*—Lyrics on classical subjects: *Lines to Virgil*; metrical experiments.

The antique, after its long partial eclipse during the age of prose, had come more and more to inspire the age of romance. And the antique, more and more, had come to mean the best Greek poetry—Homer, and Æschylus, and the anthology, and the idylls, and the odes. *Hyperion*, *Hellas*, and the writings of Landor show this inspiration at work. In Tennyson it takes new life; it produces *The Lotos-Eaters*, and *Ulysses* nine years later; and then, more than forty years after that, it produces *Tiresias*, so fresh is the old age of the poet. The spirit of Greek verse and the lesson of its art must have sunk far into a man, must have been one of the deep things in his life, to bear such fruit! And Tennyson's Hellenics —if we may use the term coined by Landor, whose own volume thus entitled appeared in 1847, and if, by a natural extension, we may apply it also to poems founded on Lucretius, Catullus, and Virgil, who were themselves inspired by Greece—Tennyson's Hellenics, then, along with some of his lyrics, include some of his most perfect and permanent work; and they remain, with *Samson Agonistes* and *Prometheus Unbound*, among the chief tributes in our language to the power of the antique.

This is a good deal to say; and some distinctions must be made. *Ulysses* and *Tiresias* are in the form on which Tennyson finally settled, not only for his classical, but for other highly characteristic pieces. This is the dramatic monologue, of moderate length, and written in a blank verse of which the qualities are

generally grandeur and composure. No one doubts that he was right to choose blank verse here, for no other measure could convey those qualities so well; or, again, that he was right to choose the monologue form, with all its difficulties. But he did not come to these discoveries at once; and whilst on the way to them he wrote things of great and acknowledged beauty, where the monologue form is not yet clear. *The Lotos-Eaters* opens with the Spenserian stanzas founded on Homer's picture of the lotos; but most of it is choric ode, in irregular measures: a monologue certainly, but a lyrical one, chanted by the sailors in unison; it is therefore expressive of a mere mood, and not, like *Ulysses*, of a whole character. The poem in its earlier form lacked the long ringing close on the life of the Lucretian gods, which enforces the note of grandeur; but from the first that note is heard—'Why should we toil alone?'—and it springs up from and begins to overpower the original strain of languor and fatal delightful ease. Still *The Lotos-Eaters* is a lyric; and *Œnone* is an idyll, keeping the refrain which the Sicilians, and Milton in his *Epitaphium Damonis*, had used so well. And though blank verse is the medium, and though it is mostly narrative and descriptive, *Œnone* is not yet the true dramatic monologue, where the story and situation are not related but are made clear by the way; and where nothing external happens, or at least need happen, the movement being purely one of thought and emotion. This kind of poem may be thought of as a single, central speech taken out of a supposed epic or play. So Browning's *My Last Duchess* and *The Bishop Orders his Tomb* have the air of coming out of an Elizabethan or modern drama. The pattern of all such compositions is found in the soliloquies of Hamlet. Tennyson,

too, approaches this less classical manner in works like *St. Simeon Stylites*.

In *Tithonus* the form is perfected. It is a speech, addressed to Eos, a *muta persona*, who nevertheless is made visible in her tender gestures like some figure in the Street of Tombs at Athens. The blank verse is there, not yet in all its nerve, but in all its grace; the poem is a triumph of grace and pathos. The peculiar *desiderium*, bred of the 'cruel immortality' under which Tithonus suffers, is enforced by the recurrence of words which give the dominant mood: *mist*, and *silver*, and *glimmering*, and *tears*, and *beauty*, and *shadow*. Here can still be traced the struggle, or rather now the fusion, between Tennyson's instinct for complexity and his instinct for simplicity. Perhaps, in *Tithonus*, the former rules. But in *Ulysses* the latter rules; the heroic style has come in its plainness and strength. Some of it has come from Dante, who supplies the story, which is not in Homer, of the last adventure of Ulysses, and whose treatment may be called in the largest and truest sense classical. Tennyson catches Dante's strain in a line like

> And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

But there is also his own intricacy of musical metaphor:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move;

and his own delight in full, cunning vowelling:

> There gloom the dark broad seas.

In *Ulysses* the conception is wider than in *Tithonus*; the symbolism is latent, but we can find it without violence. The conception of pursuing knowledge at

any cost beyond the Pillars into dangerous waters appealed as much to the age of Tennyson and Darwin as to that of Bruno and Bacon. The poem was written, said the author, 'soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*.' In *Tiresias*, again, the conception strikes beyond the story itself; it is the doom of the seer who lives to see his disregarded forebodings come true. Here elaboration rules once more. *Tiresias* is a good late example of Tennyson's complex and symphonious verse, which recalls Milton not in its actual cast, but in its comparable mastery of the steeds of Rhythm and Language—in its chariot-eering power. The 'diffuse and opulent end' which the poet supposes his friend FitzGerald to criticize is not diffuse at all, though it is opulent; and here it is, though I must not often quote Tennyson at length as if he were unfamiliar; and be it said that these qualities do not vanish in *Demeter and Persephone* or in *The Death of Œnone*, the works of his age:

But for me,
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of old,
On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
There crown'd with worship—and these eyes will find
The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
About the goal again, and hunters race
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human, strive
Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales

Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

Except for *Lucretius*, the other classical pieces are lyrics, of the sort in which poets with a brooding, tenacious type of memory excel. Gray is a brother in this craft; and its father, Virgil, Tennyson honours in his anniversary lines 'written at the request of the Mantuans.' He weaves names and images and echoes, many of them drawn from the Sixth Æneid, into a majestic harmony: the 'golden branch amid the shadows,' the 'Universal Mind,' the destiny of Rome, now at last in 1870 the 'Rome of freemen.' Had Tennyson translated Virgil, as so many have wished, he might have used the long trochaic metre of this poem, which has the 'ocean-roll of rhythm' required. The lines *To Virgil* are the flower of Tennyson's commemorative lyric, perhaps of all his lyric. His nine monorhymes on Catullus, *Frater Ave atque Vale*, are akin to them; and, what is not easy, he manages to unite tenderness with resonance. The timbrel-tune of the *Attis* echoes in the galliambics of *Boadicea*, as it was soon to do not less worthily in the *Phaéthôn* of George Meredith. The alcaics on Milton are moulded on the Greek, not on the Latin type, and aim at its 'freer and lighter movement.' They, too, are charged with allusion distilled from Milton; but why does the poet prefer the prettiness of a formal Eden to the 'roar of an angel onset'? Of the two translations from Homer into blank verse, the earlier, 'So Hector spake,' is the more magnificent, but *Achilles over the Trench* comes nearer to Homer in its cast of language; and its style might have held out better for a long experiment. On

Tennyson's deep knowledge and appropriation of classical verse much has been written; enough to say that, like Milton, he subdues his endless borrowings to his own purpose. In the last year of his life he 'enlarged for some time upon the greatness of Homer, quoting many lines from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.'

IV

The English idyll: origins; medley of styles for which blank verse is used; the minimum style—*Enoch Arden* and *The Princess*.

The 'English idyll,' already written by Southey and Wordsworth, was an attempt to extend the lower limits of poetry: to see how near, without ceasing to be poetry, verse could approach to the prose tale of humble life. Southey's *Hannah* is discouraging; but Wordsworth in his *Michael* justifies the experiment, and also the use of blank verse. No doubt, blank verse is the metre in which prose can most cheaply pretend to be something not itself. The result is easy to detect when the subject is plainly poor or sterile and when the blank verse sinks accordingly; but is not so easy when the verse keeps its dignity, reacts on the language, and raises the language above the pitch of feeling that is warranted by the subject. This point of danger is approached by Wordsworth in *The Brothers*, but is just escaped; in a tale like the *Honor Neale* of Archbishop Trench the line is passed, and the effect is bathos and *pastiche*. What, then, of *Dora*, *Edwin Morris*, and *Walking to the Mill?* Wordsworth praised *Dora*, and Matthew Arnold charged it with false simplicity. The story,

copied closely from Miss Mitford's *Tale of Dora Cresswell* in *Our Village*, is not unfitted for poetry. Tennyson, in telling it, puts a constraint on his natural style and seeks to be Wordsworthian and Biblical. The simplicity is not spurious; the story is too strong for that. But the use of metre is not always justified, for some of *Dora* is simply iambic prose. Such an effect may serve well enough when the tone is light, as it is in the description of the pie in *Audley Court* or of the pack of cards in the *Prelude*; but then *Dora* is wholly serious. Verse on the lowest ledge of diction is agreeable enough when it slips into satire like that on

> Slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
> And educated whisker,

or when it is interspersed with Tennysonian painting—

> While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
> While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
> The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

The *minimum* style, as we may call it, is like this, when the tone is meant to be serious:

> So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
> Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

These are three ways of writing; and if we add a fourth, in which Tennyson wrote reams, but in which he is never safe, the declamatory-passionate, like this—

I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—'Him!'
Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!
Girl, get you in!'—

—if we put all these together, with a touch of the speculative, or arguing style, thrown in, we are in sight of the 'medley' of *The Princess*, and of some of the elements out of which *Enoch Arden*, *Aylmer's Field*, and the rest are compounded. Here, as ever, the technique must not be judged absolutely but in its relation to the subject; and in general, throughout Tennyson, we find that in his declamatory or spasmodic writing the technique is apt to get above the subject; for when the subject is inadequate he instinctively brandishes his rhetorical flail and tries to sweep us off our feet. This drawback is felt most keenly in his blank verse. But he saves himself when the tirades are really dramatic in character; as they are in *Maud*, and as they are in *Locksley Hall*: a poem which is not only glorious in its cadence and its dreary landscape, but is also very frank and youthful, and engaging even in its absurdities. It is unlike that ineffective diatribe, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, where only a few splendours are left.

In *Enoch Arden* it is the treatment and sentiment that inspire misgiving. The tale is too good to be true. The old woman who called it 'that other beautiful tract' hit the mark. Every one is noble, no one is angry. There is not much life in the poem, except in the culminating passage, 'Now when the dead man came to life.' But the little old water-colour village and the tropical calenture are faultlessly painted. The 'costly funeral' of Enoch has been censured as tasteless; rather, it is out of keeping. It would have suited Crabbe's way of telling a story. The *Enoch Arden* volume at first bore the title *Idylls of the Hearth*, which expresses its purpose well enough.

The shot silk fabric of *The Princess* is a delightful thing to hold up and turn over in various lights, in

spite of the very noticeable hole in the middle of it. There is some confusion in the main idea. Well if Tennyson had kept the tale on the level of high serious comedy, a kind of inverse of *Love's Labour Lost*; if he had simply shown the women trying to rule out men from the scheme of things and defeated by nature, and the infant (whom Sydney Smith had said there was no fear of a woman 'deserting for a quadratic equation') playing its part in the story and the lyrics. The jest would then have lain in nature using so poor an instrument as the Prince. As it is, the irony is rather on the wrong edge, for the Prince is made the expounder of the poet's own thesis. The well-known speech, 'For woman is not undevelopt man,' contains some of the heaviest lines Tennyson ever published; but it is amiss rather in what it seems to imply than in what it says. The kind of feminine excellence which it exalts does not leave much room for Emilia Belloni, or for Volumnia, or for George Sand. Tennyson here judges more by theory than by life and the event of what women may hope to do if they are given free play. That remains to be seen. Nor did we need to be told what it is they can do which we cannot do at all, or that they always will and ought to do it.

This said, we can enjoy *The Princess* more freely. It was much revised and improved in successive editions. The insertion of the rhymed lyrics in the third drew the poem together. The 'weird seizures,' or trances, of the Prince, which first appear in the fourth, have been objected to as detracting from his consequence. But then he had little enough consequence already; and in an avowed medley one curious strand the more can do no harm. Topical allusions to the 'year of revolutions,' 1848, are also put in.

But the old admirable things all remain: the country house, the women's 'Academe,' the pictures, the lectures, the proctors, the daughters of the plough, the masquerade, the war. The style is precisely described by the supposed narrator as lying in 'a strange diagonal' between what the men wanted, the 'mock-heroic gigantesque,' and the 'true-sublime' desired by the women. For much of the time Tennyson is amusing himself with frolics and experiments in blank verse, and also by playfully exaggerating one of his faults. He knows, perhaps, that he is prone to deal in images rather beyond the occasion; as in the description of the lady 'Head.'

> Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
> Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
> Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
> Dash themselves dead.

Altogether *The Princess* is distinguished, in Jeremy Taylor's words, by 'variety, and load, and cost, and curiosity.'

V

Speculative verse, from *The Two Voices* to *The Ancient Sage*—New mastery of philosophical poetry—*In Memoriam*: in arrangement and composition, compared with Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: course of thought in the poem: effect of the metre and of its varieties.

From *The Two Voices* to *The Ancient Sage*, Tennyson was never long unoccupied with speculative verse—with what has been called 'the poetry of ideas,' argumentative, or rhetorical, or eloquent, or imaginative. He gave it new resources, he found a new style for it, he put, as we say, his weight into it. He inherited it

from Wordsworth and Shelley, but his methods are not theirs. His first experiment is *The Two Voices*. It is direct arguing, by plea and counterplea—a form he does not often use. The skill is great, but the verse drones; and the end becomes an anticlimax when the too quick despairer is dissuaded from suicide by the sight of the citizen family (infant and all) going peaceably to church. The moral in *The Palace of Art* leads, it must be said, up a blind alley. For the detachment or self-sufficiency there described is purely fictitious; it represents no known artist or theory of art; it suggests some of the old-fashioned caricatures of Goethe. A mind, moreover, that could admire 'Plato the wise' and 'world-worn Dante' is not likely altogether to 'lose sight of its relation to man and God,' as Spedding expressed it. The picture-gallery is in Tennyson's best manner, and happily its value does not depend upon the argument.

In *The Vision of Sin* the ruling idea, namely that satiety brings in its train not only impotence but malice, is not a moral commonplace. The Mænad dance is magnificent, and we could wish that Tennyson had let himself go in this direction oftener; but the old rake's lyric suffers from the hammering ranting vein into which the poet was too easily to fall. In the finale, the bronze-like ringing couplets are worthy of a more satisfactory conception. For the drift is left obscure at the last, and Tennyson's plea that 'the power of explaining such concentrated expressions of the imagination is very different from that of writing them' might not have commended itself to Dante, whose underlying thought, however difficult, is always solid and definable.

None the less all these pieces disclose a new mastery and almost a new instrument; they do not leave the

poetry of ideas where they found it; or at least they take it back to the great age, the age of the *Four Hymns* and of *Nosce Teipsum:*

> Much more, if first I floated free,
> As naked essence, must I be
> Incompetent of memory:
>
> For memory dealing but with time,
> And he with matter, should she climb
> Beyond her own material prime?

That is pure reasoning, and the same gift is seen in moral epigram. Nothing could be much conciser than this:

> Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime
> Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'
> Another said: 'The crime of sense became
> The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'

But the peculiar note of Tennyson's philosophic verse is best heard when he utters some prophetic vision, as in 'Love thou thy land' and in the companion pieces, which read like splinters of *In Memoriam*:

> Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
> A motion toiling in the gloom—
> The Spirit of the years to come
> Yearning to mix himself with Life.

This peculiar finish and concision applied to subtle ideas is not easily to be found in our poetry before Tennyson; and of such qualities *In Memoriam* is full. The lines on James Spedding's brother (*To J. S.*) are simpler and more direct than most of the great elegy, and are different in measure.

Verlaine told me that he had tried to translate *In Memoriam*, but could not, because Tennyson was 'too

noble, too *anglais*, and when he should have been broken-hearted had many reminiscences.'

So records a living poet[n.]; and Charlotte Brontë had made a similar complaint against this 'rhymed, and printed, and measured monument of grief.' There is really nothing in it; *In Memoriam* does not profess to be either a brief lyric or a tragical soliloquy. Tennyson *was* broken-hearted; in our 'reminiscence,' even if not otherwise, the dead live; and, whatever the speculative value of the poem, it records a great friendship. *In Memoriam* is more impressive than anything Tennyson wrote on the love of women. It contains some direct arguing; and if we judge this to be, properly speaking, superfluous, since the final consolation and conviction rest not on reasoning at all, but on a mystical intuition which is good for those who have it and meaningless for others, still the reasoning is dramatically in place. It shows the baffled workings of the poet's mind before the intuition came to him. *In Memoriam* contains some of his best and and some of his most dubious writing.

Composed at intervals over long years, it was no preconceived whole, nor can it be called an artistic whole. The poet tries to make it such by arranging the numbers in an order which was not that of the composition, and is therefore not that of the moods and experiences related. Possibly the same is true of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, as we have them. In both cases the result falls into certain internal groups, each bound together by its own ruling idea, such as the consolations of friendship or the vanity of fame. But the different members of each group may belong to different times and occasions; and again, the arrangement of the groups themselves may be only an

afterthought. All through both poems meditations on man and the world, on beauty and conduct, and on the power of thought by its own energy to overcome distance or death, ray out from the main theme of the friend's affection. The comparison need go no further. But the separate numbers, long or short, of *In Memoriam*, have the same kind of unity as the sonnets in an Elizabethan series; that is, they are mostly detachable and complete poems, yet are linked more or less closely with their neighbours, so that the whole has at any rate the semblance of unity; and this is enhanced by the unity of the metre—by the strong illusion which a peculiar and powerful metre will produce in spite of much disharmony in the contents. The argument and evolution of *In Memoriam* are complex, and a brief summary will be unjust to them.

At first the poet is drowned in grief, and plays with it, and makes love to it, as if wearily, sinking into it deliberately, and pausing to cheat himself with sombre fancies. He follows the voyage of the ship which brought his dead friend back, and he re-threads the course of the friendship. After many ebbs and flows of feeling he finds that grief is a true possession; and he begins to found a kind of faith upon it. He finds in the mystery of life itself, and in that of love, some assurance of survival; failing this, life itself would be a chaos. Then he has a gleam of hope that the dead may really care for us; he muses on the possible nature of the disembodied soul, and on how far it may remember its earthly affections. He revolts against the notion that the soul, after death, is at once absorbed in the Whole; he judges, as a matter of blind faith, that evil may in the end somehow generate good, in spite of the indifference of Nature to man who is her chief product. Then follow reflections upon the

value and quality of posthumous fame, which Tennyson, unlike the Elizabethans, but like Emily Brontë, holds in light esteem. At last, in the dark garden, he has the trance-like experience[n.] in which he believes that he communes with his friend. After this his love grows afresh, and widens out to include mankind, whose hopes and future occupy him and calm his grief. Love, now universalized, is seen to be the principle of human progress. Man's freewill, and the outlook of the race, form a foundation for hope. The epilogue, on the marriage of the poet's sister, is in accord with these aspirations; the whole work being as he says 'a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending in happiness.'

Thus *In Memoriam* is no simple elegy, but, like *Adonais*, is charged with the poetry of ideas. Its power lies, however, less in its thinking than in playing with the logic of feeling—in the analysis of grief and hope, of memory, and vision. Neither Milton nor Matthew Arnold have this habit of mind. Tennyson knows that he does not *know* what he feels until he has shaped it into finished and lucid expression. And though some of *In Memoriam* is condensed to the point of darkness, it is on the whole a lucid expression of obscure feelings, not an obscure expression of confused thoughts. Nor is it all in this difficult style. The picture of the college friendship and of Hallam's character are simple; and the sections describing the 'joyless day,' or the coming of spring, are among Tennyson's triumphs in the expression of sound and colour.

The metre, the old 'closed' short-line quatrain, used by Ben Jonson and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, he did not borrow, at least consciously, from those authors. It has, however, a persistent ring of its

own, whosoever may use it, as we see by comparing them all, and Rossetti afterwards. Tennyson, no doubt, gives it most of the variety of which it is capable; uses it for a kind of epigram, or for a long concerted paragraph taken in one breath, or for dream-narrative; keeps it usually level and lineal, but on occasion breaks the lines or runs on the verses; now going sweetly, now mustering all the shattering sounds that he can find. Some of these modulations are seen in No. CVII:

The time admits not flowers or leaves
  To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
  The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
  To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
  Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
  To darken on the rolling brine
  That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass; . . .

It is easy to find the sweet and fluent, or the grave and sententious, numbers in contrast to this. They are, indeed, everywhere.

VI

Tennyson's position in the religious speculation of his time; 'right centre'—States of vision; 'the Nameless'; *The Ancient Sage.*

In Memoriam, the chief document for Tennyson's religious faith, also marks a passing phase of opinion.

It shows a great loosening of doctrinal bonds; it is relatively liberal; it is leagues away from, and it makes dead against, that hardening of dogma which was the aim of the first High Churchmen. It attempts to embody in poetry some of the conclusions, as yet but half-divined, of the science of the day. At the same time Tennyson forebodes the results of what and was soon (1869) to be called 'agnosticism' and has since been called 'naturalism.' The poem, then, becomes a plea against a negative or neutral view on the question of personal immortality: a plea founded in part on the deliverance of the writer's own heart, or of his mystical vision, and partly on the conviction that all the hopes of mankind are staked upon the issue. Without thus much faith, freed though it be from theological terms, he sees all other faith in the future of the world disappearing. How this train of thought appealed to some of the keener minds may be seen from the letter of Henry Sidgwick printed in the *Memoir* of Tennyson, from the conclusion of his *Methods of Ethics*, and from the conversations of Tyndall and others with the poet.

Tennyson, then, and those who went with him, by no means represented the 'extreme right' among believers, but rather a kind of 'right centre', which accepts a good many of the new ideas but remains vehemently conservative nevertheless. Others like Mill, Huxley, and Leslie Stephen, sat much farther to the 'left,' and took a more stoical view. Tennyson does not seem to grasp their position at all. He thus has his place, and a prominent one, in the protest against naturalism. With Browning, he stands for the protest of poetry against it. One poet, however, 'Master Swinburne,' as Tennyson was heard to call him, was to express in a single piece,

The Pilgrims (1871) an ideal of progress achieved through union in self-sacrifice : an ideal which seemed to remain all the clearer before mankind after it had quitted the ancient faiths.

Tennyson rang the changes on the ideas of *In Memoriam* from time to time afterwards. His obscurest lines, *The Higher Pantheism*, seem to identify the outer world with deity ; and to say that the spirit of man is only kept by its own blindness from perceiving that identity, but that even this blindness may be got over in certain hours of vision. The reference may be to a personal experience, which is related by the poet both in prose and in verse of *The Ancient Sage*, and which he could invite by

> revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself—

that is, his own name ; and then, he tells us,

> The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
> And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
> Melts into Heaven.

The ' Nameless,' which is the source of power and life and the quest of vision, is not spoken of by the sage as having personality or consciousness. It has no predicates, or it has all, according as we state the matter. And so far it resembles Herbert Spencer's ultimate reality, the ' Unknowable,' with the difference that Tennyson thinks that it can be really known. Whether this belief has a speculative value or a purely psychological interest, is another question. Tennyson manages to connect it with the moral counsel of the sage to the young pessimist who writes desperate (though excellent) lyrics, and also with his own faith in some kind of posthumous survival. The

counsels themselves are obvious ones, put into sonorous language; the young man is bidden not to dress finely, not to

fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms,

as though it were heinous to do so. The poem has been much admired and is highly wrought, but has not much substance in it save for the description of the trance. Tennyson seems to be on safer ground when he slips away from metaphysics into psychology or pathology; and, in that region, his power is best seen in his dramatic monologues.

VII

Dramatic monologues: *Lucretius*—*Maud*, its construction, hero, and finale.

These are linked with his classical and also with his speculative poetry by *Lucretius*, the work in which he comes nearest the sublime—the vehement sublime of *Macbeth* or *Othello* and not the controlled sublime of Milton. Many a strand of the *De Rerum Natura* is woven into it, in Tennyson's way, including certain passages betraying suppressed strain and fever. Nor does scholarship altogether dismiss the legend as to the cause of Lucretius's death. Thus the disorder of images in the poem is all in keeping, and most of them are suggested by something in the original. The jostling of atoms and gods, of the Oread and the Hetairai, in the mind of the sick man is part of his malady; and the nobly changeful blank verse harmonises the fluctuations between beauty and discord. *St. Simeon Stylites*, an earlier work more in Browning's

fashion, is also intense and sustained; but so fierce and so unrelieved is the tension that the poem at last begins to deaden itself. And over the admired *Rizpah*, founded though it be upon a fact, and great as is its energy, the same doubt arises; for it the passionate language runs off into the clattering rhetoric that was Tennyson's chief weakness.

But in *Maud*, where the pathological soliloquy is tested hardest and longest, the rhetoric is all in keeping with the speaker. The public, no doubt, forgot that the speaker was not the poet; but there was something in its shrewd suspicion that the poet was often the speaker's accomplice. Certainly Tennyson could speak, in his own person, very like the hero of *Maud*. This can be felt in such pieces as *Vastness*. But a work of art must be judged as it stands, and all this does not really tell against *Maud*. Tennyson exactly describes the construction of the work when he says that 'different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters.' The story unfolds itself in a string of lyrics, each of them a more or less independent poem, and each introducing a new moment in the situation; each again, having its special mood embodied in the metre. The return of the metre reannounces the mood. Slow sane iambs, hectic anapæsts, joyous trochees, and many birdlike or dirgelike short measures, form, in their succession and interwoven recurrence, a complete musical fabric; one extreme being seen in 'Go not, happy day' and in the famous song of the rooks calling; and the other in the long-breathed appeal, climbing and falling through a sentence of fourteen plangent lines, to the 'Cold and clear-cut face.' A full study of the prosody of *Maud*, considered as an index of emotion, is the quickest way to the heart of the poem. The

facts are sometimes confusing, but are cleared up by the notes (by no means superfluous) which the poet added.

The speaker is a *decadent*, a kind of Hamlet without the brains, and Tennyson never dramatised any personage so clearly. The language is that of an abnormal but real man; it is not the wonderfully patterned gauze of words that screens the Lancelots and Arthurs off from us. The novelists had often tried to give the speech of madness or distraction; specimens can be found in Hogg's *Confessions of a Fanatic* and Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Was Tennyson on his mettle to rival or surpass in verse the writers of the 'school of terror'? The insane musings of the slayer upon his deed are sometimes worthy of the best Elizabethans—but a little more, and we should think of Sheridan's Tilburina. In the end the narrator is cured by the patriotic passion for war, and is made 'one with his kind.' This, no doubt, was the hardest corner for the poet, and also for his critics, to turn. In the drama, the change is natural enough. But it was just here that the poet seemed to be speaking with his own voice. Yet he never says (though he was rated for saying) that war is good in itself and will cure everybody. He does say that it may cure not only a hysterical youth but a stagnant nation. This idea was unpalatable to minds like Gladstone's. And the war was the Crimean war, which was going on. Even those who approved of it could not see its connection with the evils declaimed at in the poem, of adulterated bread and slum violence. Was this inconsequence simply in the crazy speaker or in the poet himself? Altogether, *Maud* was puzzling, and was long and considerably disliked; its artistic qualities were obscured by the dust that it

raised. It is really Tennyson's greatest and most genuine production of any length.

VIII

Arthuriad: *Morte d'Arthur*—*Idylls of the King*; Malory overlaid with symbolism and ornament—Order of production; embarrassments—Tennyson and Morris—Allegory and mysticism.

Like Milton and Dryden, he dreamed in youth of a great poem, epical or dramatic, with Arthur for chief personage, and his knights around him. But they were all to be moral symbols. 'K. A. Religious Faith...the Round Table...liberal institutions'—so runs an early note. This was before Tennyson had found the right measure for such a task, his blank verse. He found it, we know, in the volume of 1842; but there, besides *Morte d'Arthur*, come the lyrics *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*, which is purely romantic and sympathetic, and *Sir Galahad*, which is ballad-like and direct and (despite the appearance of the Grail) unmystical. *Morte d'Arthur* is set in a scrap of country-house idyll. This was to be shorn away later, and another prelude made, when the poem became *The Passing of Arthur*. The style is the decorative-heroic; there is the conscious delight of a still young poet in full-vowelled sequences and consonantal clusters, harsh or sweet as may best serve. These ornaments overlay the simple words of Malory, which are closely followed as to the story. And another element, that of symbolism, begins to overlay them also. Ornament and symbolism often measure the distance of Tennyson from Malory's book and from the *Mabinogion*, his two chief sources. They

are natural to him, and we must take what he gives us and see what he makes of it.

With *Maud* now behind him, Tennyson returned to his Arthurian venture. He began by applying to it a craft, namely, the portraiture of women, in which his friend Millais was also skilled. He printed privately *Enid and Nimuë, or The True and the False*—an Edgeworthian contrast afterwards dropped from the title. In the volume of 1859, *Idylls of the King*, Nimuë is called Vivien, and *Elaine* and *Guinevere* are added. The style is revised and heightened, and the more colloquial touches are weeded out; the Theocritean 'idyl' becomes the heroic 'idyll.' The regular manner of the poem, now simple and now elaborate, is established. This volume has a symmetry and foursquareness which are absent in the ultimate twelve poems as a whole. The allegory is still faint; there are four tales, four types, four different but not inharmonious frames of mind. The portraits are not all equally good. Vivien cajoles and spits and rails, but remains a description rather than a woman. Arthur, in *Guinevere* is scarcely a copy-book man (as is usually said), but rather the wrong sort of man; he is all too real, as a pompous lecturer is real. William Morris in the preceding year had published *The Defence of Guenevere*, the book which includes *King Arthur's Tomb* and *The Chapel in Lyoness*, and these poems owe something to Tennyson's early lyrics. But we have only to compare, to see what Tennyson is not going to give us:

> Must I now prove
> Stone-cold for ever? Pray you, does the Lord
> Will that all folks should be quite happy and good?

Put that beside this:

Ah, great and gentle lord . . .
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up . . .

What Tennyson, for our happiness, will give us, what no one else can give us so well, is this :

She saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire ;

Or this—

But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter wind about a stone
On the bare coast.

Felicity, colour, singularity, magnificence, these we get in abundance. They are all to be found in *Enid*, which was cut up later into *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid* ; and also in *Elaine*, afterwards called *Lancelot and Elaine* ; but there is something more as well. The tale of Enid, drawn from Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*, is not only a lovely one, but mediæval in the best sense of the term ; it has, says a critic, ' none of the ineradicable falsity of the story of Griselda ' ; and the poet, however much he may decorate, keeps to the original in spirit and incident. The sustained note of devotion and pathos may perhaps rank it even above *Elaine*, where such qualities are obscured by the lengthy jealous oration of the Queen. Nor does anything in the story of Astolat come so nearly home as the ending of *The Lady of Shalott :*

But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, ' She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy send her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

The Holy Grail and other Poems included *The Coming of Arthur*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and the reset *Passing of Arthur*. Later came *Gareth and Lynette* and *The Last Tournament*. The cycle was now announced as complete, but there was still to be an afterthought, *Balin and Balan*. In the last recension (1888), the order and text of the *Idylls* were finally given as we now have them, after a long succession of changes. This order, then, is very different from the order of composition, the first idyll written being now the last. Tennyson has been criticised as though no result thus attained could be artistic. But the fault may be less in the to-and-fro nature of the composition than in the nature of the whole enterprise. The idylls are made at different times and are various in key, and are, therefore, the harder to fit into a harmonious whole. *The Coming of Arthur* is a rather desperate attempt to bind together in advance the already existing poems. One problem is to make the magical environment of Arthur accord with his highly abstract and idealised character. This difficulty is felt most keenly at the conclusion ; for how, we ask, should such a half-modern, half-symbolic person as Arthur has now become, *deserve* to disappear to Avilion ? And the curse that hangs over his origin is equally wasted on such a personage. The best poetry in *The Coming of Arthur* is found in the lyric, and in the dream of Leodogran ; and of course there is much splendour in the detail.

In *The Holy Grail*, which Tennyson truly called ' one of the most imaginative of my poems,' the great

passages of Malory—the girding of Galahad, the passing of the Grail through the hall of knights, and the visit of Lancelot to the chamber whose breath was like a furnace—are transferred without loss of power. Tennyson is true to mediæval sentiment; no one can say that here he confounds purity with respectability. On the contrary, the flying, holy, crimson lights that shoot through the poem are but the outward sign of the active passion, transcendental and supreme, for purity itself, as that virtue was mediævally understood. The opening picture of homely monkish life and talk is not less genuine. From Malory also came the hint for the idea that the quest for the Grail betokens the break-up of the goodly fellowship; few of the knights prove worthy of that quest; and these shadows become blacker in *Pelleas and Ettarre*, with its notes of scorn and faithlessness, and the final execration of Pelleas as he flings away into the dark. *The Last Tournament* gives the bitter ending of the tale of Tristram without any of the rapture. In *Balin and Balan*, which in the final arrangement comes as a prelude to *Merlin and Vivien*, there is little of the uplifted spirit and lofty pathos which attends the progress of the brothers, 'in life and death good knights,' through Swinburne's *Tale of Balen*. It is a pity that Tennyson had to discolour two such stories in order to fit them into his picture of social degeneracy. But the prose argument that he dictated of *Balin and Balan* makes some amends. *The Passing of Arthur* concludes the whole; and we can now look back on the representative, or allegorical, aspect of the *Idylls of the King*. The allegory, which was in the poet's mind from the first, comes out more as he proceeds, and it is in at the death of Arthur.

Tennyson preferred never to press it or to make it

quite clear ; he leaves it suggestive rather than formal. It exhibits ' sense at war with soul.' The code of the Round Table ordains a certain pattern of conduct, chivalrous and pious, proclaimed and vowed, in which self-sacrifice, bravery, and purity predominate. The actors are the knights who obey or disobey this rule, and the women who inspire or discourage them. In course of time the cardinal Christian virtue is betrayed by the noblest knight and noblest lady, though not without a remorse which is intensified to the point of repentance. Modred, Ettarre, Vivien are foremost in the scene. Arthur, who, as in Spenser, binds together all the virtues, is left and dies. It is a tragedy. Still the world is to begin again afterwards, with the prophecy of a new hope and order. Further than this Tennyson's intention need not be driven ; but we have his own words for his faith, the faith which alone, as he believed, can survive any spectacle of the kind :

I have expressed there [in *The Holy Grail*] my strong belief as to the Reality of the Unseen. The end, when the king speaks of his work and of his visions, is intended to be the summing up of all in the highest note by the highest of human men. These three lines in Arthur's speech are the (spiritually) central lines of the *Idylls* :

> In moments when he feels he cannot die
> And knows himself no vision to himself,
> Nor the High God a vision.

Here Arthur is real, because he is Tennyson and not the Prince Consort or another ; and the passage that follows in the *Memoir* shows Tennyson's indefeasible conviction : ' You never, never can convince me that

the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the spiritual is not the only true and real part of me.'

This language is modern-philosophical, not mediæval at all. And the first proposition is just the opposite of what a Buddhist would affirm with equal assurance. However that be, it is plain how far Tennyson has travelled from his material; and we have to ask how, after all, the symbolism in the *Idylls* will consent to join itself to the story. It does not join; the attempt is a failure, in spite of all the points of contact with mediæval feeling. But the failure is more interesting than most successes. The allegory does not do much harm; and there is always the handiwork to fall back on. The *Idylls* remain idylls, separate poems, interlaced by a hundred threads, with their incongruous elements half-hidden by the execution. Their poetic virtues are those of Tennyson's work at large. Their faults delighted their public. Their chief and central weakness is their treatment of passionate love, which is immensely talked about, and also considerably scolded, without ever being allowed to show itself frankly and simply. But the pictures, the 'interiors' and pageants, the epic similes, which contain some of Tennyson's best observation, the songs, the fresh and subtle prosodic effects, are hard to exhaust. There is grandeur, now and then. And if, not content with imitations, or beautiful dexterities, we insist, in taking leave of the *Idylls*, on Tennyson doing his utmost for us in the way of grandeur, this is the kind of poetry we shall think of:

Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl—

No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.

IX

Lyric; sixty years of production—Pace of the lyrics—Natural and elaborated song.

Tennyson's lyrical gift spans the sixty years of his production. It is not equally active all the time, but comes and goes like a frequent rainbow. It is heard in description, satire, and many other kinds of verse that are not in themselves lyrical. It finds its way into narrative like *The Voyage of Maeldune*. It also sometimes gets into the blank verse. The rhymeless lyrics in *The Princess* fall into stanzas, and some of those in the *Idylls* go into triads, with an echo or refrain that recalls the bell-ringer's craft. The same overflow of the lyric faculty occurs everywhere in Swinburne, because he cannot help it; in Tennyson it is a deliberate use of surplus power.

His lyrics properly so-called, including his songs, share in the general characters of his poetry—its close texture, its consciousness, its studious management of sound, and its usual, though by no means invariable, leisureliness. He does not always 'toll slowly,' as *The Brook*, *The Voyage*, *The Revenge*, and *The Defence of Lucknow* prove in various ways. And in the last two of these, weight is added to pace; the waves come high as well as fast, and the troughs are deep between. All four are triumphs of execution; and what Tennyson does in them is to make English more like Italian, and to circumvent as much

as he can the inherent abruptness and knottiness of our language. He is justly famed for the riches and cunning of his vowel-sequences, in which he seeks variety as well as resonance, and for his avoidance of hiatus and conflicting sibilants, and of harsh sounds generally except for a purpose. No one could have written so well, for an English *De Volgari Eloquentia*, the chapter where Dante distinguishes the words that are severally 'glossy,' and 'combed-out,' and 'rumpled.' This kind of skill is best seen and is most wanted in lyric. For in lyric sound and substance have to be most nearly blended, and the substance is least able to excuse or carry off any failure in the sound.

Tennyson does not owe much to any lyrical poet, though we can point to some resemblances. 'The splendour falls on castle walls' might have been envied by Scott as a great thing somewhat in his own style. The hardly wordable feeling in 'Tears, idle tears' would have come home to Shelley: 'the passion of the past,' Tennyson called it, saying he had often felt it in his childhood. Of the classical lyrics, ode-like or commemorative, something has been said already. Tennyson is more at home in these carefully concerted pieces, be they short, or long with full rolling lines, than in the briefer spontaneous kind. He can also break into perfectly natural song; we have only to think of 'Come not, when I am dead.' But he seems to have felt that these visitations were rare, to judge by his language about Burns and the Caroline singers: 'I would give all my poetry to have made one song like that!' And we can, if we like, measure the rest of his lyric by its distance from a 'song like that.' Many of the numbers of *In Memoriam* move lyrically; but their elaborated harmonies, like the

alcaics on Milton, are at the opposite pole to song. The patriotic narrative chants, of a kind that Tennyson more or less invented, are much more direct; yet it is rather in the way of high oratory, which is not satisfied with any instrument but the most sonorous. *The Revenge* and *The Defence of Lucknow* are examples. In this last the lines are shorter and choppier, and the tension is sharper accordingly, as befits the more terrible nature of the doom, which here threatens women and children and not only men. It stands with Christina Rossetti's little piece, *In the Round Tower of Jhansi*; and with Sir Alfred Lyall's *Theology in Extremis*, which perhaps hits hardest of all these Indian poems. *The Voyage of Maeldune*, another highly wrought narrative, leaves behind it a glorious confusion of imagery, as it is meant to do, and is a great feat, being a lyrical story which goes at a quick pace in spite of being charged with description. *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade* is also one of Tennyson's most expert lyrics, and is markedly cunning in modulation, like all of his performances upon the *lyra heroica*.

X

Dramas; history plays and romantic plays.

Three of Tennyson's dramas fall, as to subject and spirit, into their place beside his patriotic poems: these are *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket*. He wished to produce a series of 'history plays' on reigns which the Elizabethans had left untouched. The Shakespearean inspiration is plainest in the earliest, *Queen Mary*. But the best parts of it are still Tennysonian and pictorial. Such is the scene where the

young Wyatt muses over his father's sonnets, or the description of Lady Jane Grey at the block. It is difficult to fill the stage with the character of Mary; her fanaticism, her bewailing of her barrenness, and her passion for Philip are traits that encourage Tennyson's old style of vehement and rather tiresome rhetoric. This, in fact, is his danger all through his plays; and it is not the kind of style that holds the theatre, though it is the supposed needs of the theatre that prompt him to fall back upon it. Thus in *Queen Mary* we feel that Tennyson's strong brain is struggling with an inappropriate form of writing which comes easy to him. But in *Harold*, which was not acted, there is much poetic flame, and the tragic clash of characters, moving towards a predestined end, is conveyed with power; and moreover Tennyson is here content with his own style and makes the utmost of it, not drawing particularly upon the older drama. The chiming snatch of Edith, 'Love is come with a song and a smile,' is like one of the interludes in *The Princess*. *Becket*, played after Tennyson's death, was the most successful on the boards, though he had almost despaired of its success; the pageantry, the acting of Sir Henry Irving, and the swiftness of the action, which is little troubled by curious writing, all helped it. Tennyson's long struggle for a dramatic style is better rewarded in *Becket* than elsewhere; but he hardly got free of the habit of tirade, which is essentially of the *Aylmer's Field* order, though it is now transferred to a greater scene.

The romantic plays are rich in poetry; except for *The Promise of May*, with its invented seducer-epicurean-unbeliever; of this work, least said soonest mended. In *The Cup*, on the other hand, not only is the execution beautiful, but the story is sound. It

is called a tragedy, but it contains no struggle of motive; it is a short story of righteous vengeance in which both avenger and victim fall; as simple as a ballad, but decorated with Tennyson's lifelong skill. The streaks of good nature in the deeply-dyed murderer Synorix are indeed scarcely credible; but the light falls clear on the radiant figure of Camma who feigns to accept marriage with him, the slayer of her husband, in order to punish him and die with him at the altar. The play is a new kind of 'Hellenic,' a species of poem in which Tennyson had first proved his power more than forty years before. The little scene called *The Falcon*, versified from Boccaccio's tale, is in point of handiwork a worthy pendant to *The Cup*; and *The Foresters* is pleasant enough.

XI

Management of words; use of the *kenning*, observation underlying the felicities—Blank verse—Tennyson's general position.

Books have been written on Tennyson's distillation of the poets, on his management of description, on his political and social ideas, and on his 'teaching' at large. Another should be written on his use of words, by some poet of the same stamp. Every one sees his general mastery of them, and also his tricks and obvious gestures of style—such as his use and abuse of the *kenning*, or pictorial description of something that is not called by its own name. 'The word that is the symbol of myself'; 'the chalice of the grapes of God'; 'the knightly growth that fringed his lips': these differ from the old Germanic habit of language, in Anglo-Saxon or Icelandic, because

they are longer, roundabout phrases and not mere compounds like the ' surge-floater ' or the ' ring-dealer.' But they are due to the same desire to secure dignity, richness, and iridescent phrase. This craft is often used for effects of colour :

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the May-white.

Or thus :

and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears.

Such examples are endless ; but they blend into the poet's general mode of figured speech, which in his heroic and mock-heroic blank verse may spread out into formal simile, but more often simply turns to packed and vivid metaphor. And if we analyse, we never come on generality or vacancy, but always on something which is first substantially seen or definitely heard, and is then patiently brooded on until the image of it is realised in the predestined phrase. Tennyson, no doubt, misses the effects that are won by a happy gambling with words, which are flung down for the stake of all or nothing. Such is Browning's way, and his luck in such things is immense ;

Ah, see ! the sun breaks o'er Calvano ;
He strikes the great gloom
And flutters it o'er the mount's summit
In airy gold fume !

This is not smooth, but it gives an instantaneous vision of the scene. The other method of showing a sunrise, the method of ' the faultless painter,' is seen in such lines as

Far-furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

Tennyson's own letters and remarks supply the best clue to this admirable way of working; and when he seemed forced or surprising he always knew the facts better than his critics. He remembered when and where he had seen the 'slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,' or had heard the wind

shake the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

In this kind of effect Tennyson, so far from being open to criticism, supplies a standard of rightness beyond which no one need try to go. The new thing is his peculiar notation, which seems the more his own the more we compare him with any previous poet, be it Keats or another. Its mark is a condensation which is only limited by the law of beauty, and the effect of which is always to make the pace of the poetry slower; encrusting the lines as it does with gemwork that we have to stop and study, and lending itself to a rich crowding of stresses and musical consonants. Thus Tennyson's imagery, and his passion for compressing his thought, help to mould his versification. To all this the simplest clue is found in a study of his metres[n.]; on which excellent chapters have been written, though the subject might fill a small volume. Something has been said of it here in connexion with his lyrics; and on his main achievement, his blank verse, one remark must suffice.

It is, for good and ill, the most conscious blank verse in the language of any written by a master. It is more conscious even than Milton's; for Milton, intensely as he studies his form, forgets himself more often than Tennyson does in the passion or exaltation of his subject. If this seems too fine a point, let the reader compare *Ulysses* or *Tiresias* with one of the

greater speeches of Satan. And we, in these matters, are led by the poet; *we* too think, just in so far as he does himself, more of the manipulation and less of the thing said. Hence Tennyson seldom leaves us quite free to think simply of what he is saying. This holds good, I think, of most of his verse, but it holds good less of his lyric, of his meditative verse, and most of all of his blank verse. Yet, if this drawback be once reckoned with, and if we also accept, as a general habit, the comparative slowness of his metrical movement, we can then follow the changes and modulations of his blank line, and of his concerted paragraphs, with the pleasure that he designs for us. Much technical statement would be necessary for a full description. The illustrations already given from the English idylls show one or two varieties of his heroic line in its lighter uses; and of these the great repertory is *The Princess*. The more impassioned dramatic monologues show, naturally, a wider range of effect; and *Lucretius* may be taken as Tennyson's most surprising feat as an executant. In his dramas he seeks to push yet further beyond the ordinary limits of the metre. He makes some unusual experiments, including a four-syllabled foot with a hypermetrical close and only three full stresses in the line:

That you may feéd | your fán | cy on | the glór | y of it.

But it is impossible to begin so long a story: let the student think how much there would be to say on the versecraft of the following four lines, to go no further:

'The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven.'
'Melody on branch, and melody in mid-air.'
'Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces.'
'Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly.'

Or let him go through the prolonged complex sound-

pattern of *Love and Duty*, with its passionate vibrations, from the technical point of view.

Tennyson commanded a style and a music adequate, we may think, for the great poems which he never wrote. They would have been a regal raiment for ideas which never reached him, and are sometimes too good a raiment for the ideas which he expressed; and it is doubtful whether this is a fault on the right side. But he had many ideas too—not necessarily philosophical, but poetical, ideas; and he arrayed them perfectly. Perhaps the conceptions embodied in his classical poems like *Ulysses* and *Tiresias* wear the best of all. And he invents a new style, an admirable one, for the expression of many strange but real feelings; of these *Maud* is the fullest record. And, as we have seen, he can sing; now and then simply, more often not so simply but still with a wonderful trained voice of great compass. Tennyson is the chief poet, during the nineteenth century, of the tribe to which belong Milton and Gray—and, let us add, his own master, Virgil.

XII

Charles Tennyson (Turner): sonnets, themes—Frederick Tennyson.

The Laureate's brothers are not to be forgotten. The sonnets of Charles Tennyson, who assumed the surname of Tennyson Turner, number three hundred and forty-two, and are formally distinguished by the great freedom and suppleness of their rhyming schemes, always within the limit of the fourteen lines; and by the natural and imperceptible character of such metrical heresies, which do but follow the movement of the feeling. Great suavity, ease, and simplicity, and a constant and reticent sense of beauty, mark the verse

of Tennyson Turner. He is best when he sings, in what he calls the 'quick-spent' sonnet, of small and shy matters; he has a Cowper-like preference and affection for them, though like Cowper he strays now and then into uncongenial declamation. For much of his life he was a parson in a lonely village on the wolds, in what is still one of the unspoilt and unadvertised parts of England. Alfred Tennyson gives the solitude and solemnity of these regions, and their roomy horizons with 'the rounding grey.' Charles Tennyson Turner gives their gentler, homelier aspects and 'old ruralities,' and sings of the April day, the harvest home, the 'thaw-wind,' the light on the gossamer, the steam threshing-machine, even the 'scarecrow, or malkin.' He is none the worse when he shortens his quiet and pious morals and keeps to description:

> Upon the golden aconites I look'd,
> And on the leafless willows as they waved—
> And on the broad leaved, half-thaw'd ivy-tod,
> That glitter'd, dripping down upon the sod.

Tennyson Turner's range, however, is not a small one; his sonnets are a diary of his sympathies, travels, and reading. There are children's little themes, the rocking-horse and the dead pet bird; Wordsworthian notes, like that on the *Moselle Boatman and his Daughter*; bolder things, well ventured, like *The Lion's Skeleton*; Greek and Roman memories, with the praise of him

> who set his stately seal
> Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
> Of old-world husbandry;

and with the beautiful imaginative meditation on *The Lachrymatory*; and *The White Horse of Westbury*, which comes to life and relapses into chalk. There

is much else; Tennyson Turner well merited his brother's praises, and those of their friend Spedding and of Coleridge; his verse is a relief after the heavily-laden and intricate sonnets of Rossetti's school; and his extreme modesty and aversion to emphasis cannot prejudice his position.

The verse of the eldest brother, Frederick, has less definite character than that of Charles, in spite of the evident force and accomplishment which impressed FitzGerald and other contemporaries. His classical poems, and the blank verse in which most of them are written, are in no sense an echo of the Laureate. But there is a want of concentration in his work. Sometimes, in his earliest independent volume, *Days and Hours*, the inspiration is rather that of Shelley:

> When the poet's heart is dead,
> That with fragrance, light, and sound
> Like a Summerday was fed,
> Where, Oh! where shall it be found,
> In Sea, or Air, or underground?
>
> It should be a sunny place;
> An urn of odours; a still well,
> Upon whose undisturbed face
> The light of Heaven shall love to dwell,
> And its far depths make visible.

In *The Isles of Greece* Frederick Tennyson builds up on the basis of Greek lyrical fragments and traditions, a series of Hellenics centring in the figures of Sappho and Alcæus, under such titles as *Apollo*, *Phaon*, *Myrsilus*, and the like. There is no want of dignity, or of accurate scenery and costume, but the total effect is rather cold. More classical tales followed in *Daphne*; but Frederick Tennyson, publishing as he did so late, just when criticism was beginning to turn even upon his overshadowing brother, won too little note.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

I

Formative influences: Goethe, the Greeks, Wordsworth, the Bible, etc.

It is more than seventy years since the appearance of *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems, by A*; and more than thirty since Matthew Arnold died. His verse, even though prose sometimes intrudes into it, wears better than his prose; in his own pleasant phrase, it is less 'touched with caducity.' Though his prose can be that of a master, and is sometimes that of a poet, *Thyrsis* is safer, and comes purer from the source, than the *Essays in Criticism*. But we must study the whole of Matthew Arnold if we are to see what he can still say to us and what influences went to the making of him. About these he has told us a good deal. Speaking of Byron, he says that he himself was just in time to 'feel the expiring wave of that mighty influence.' Only, surely, the spray of the wave. He writes of Byron with more critical admiration than sympathy. His own temper, his melancholy, are different altogether. Byron rebelled against the conditions of human life, Matthew Arnold conducts his quarrel, in a dignified sad way, with an age of sciolism and vulgarity. In fact, he followed Carlyle's counsel, 'Close thy Byron; open thy Goethe.' And the Goethe whom he opened was not

only the sage, full of the wisdom of life, but Goethe the student of the Greeks, who had attained some of their *symmetria prisca* and artistic self-restraint. And Matthew Arnold also went straight to the Greeks themselves, to Homer, Sophocles, and Theocritus. Nearer home he found an attraction at least as strong in the poetry of Wordsworth, and ranked him extravagantly high amongst the modern poets. And he returned, above all, to the literature of the Bible. Probably the Bible and Wordsworth were the chief moulders of his mind, and the Greek poets and Goethe came next. We must add Dante and Milton amongst the poets, and amongst the critics Sainte-Beuve. He was immensely receptive, by nature and on principle too. He exposed himself with much deliberation to the process of 'culture,' seeking to absorb the 'best that has been said and thought in the world.' The wonder is that he did not sink under the discipline; but he was strong enough to reap its fruits. He emerges with a mind, and with a tune, that are his very own—*ein eigenster Gesang*.

II

Revolt against romanticism—His purpose, its advantages and penalties; attitude to 'beauty,' formulæ.

He began, both as poet and critic, by rejecting the former generation. He was afterwards to speak nobly of Keats and handsomely of Byron; but against the romantic movement in England, though himself one of its children, he rebelled. He found a deficiency of substance and of satisfactory 'subject-matter' in its productions; nor was he always content with 'Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so

wanting in completeness and variety.' He disliked no less the romantic looseness of structure and excess of imagery ; and he found the romantic dissatisfaction with life a sterile mood. And in his poetry Matthew Arnold tries to make good these defects, while in his prose he tries to prescribe for the mental maladies that produce them. The poet must find something great and sound and real to write about ; he must have plastic power, or a command of structure ; and he must possess a great, or an adequate, poetic style. The critic and the man of culture must find their food and medicine in the contemplation of the great style itself ; in the study of many literatures ; and in the discipline of impartial thinking, or of striving ' to see the object as it really is.' Matthew Arnold's own labours were scattered ; but this underlying purpose gives them a certain unity.

He paid, no doubt, for his purpose ; he paid for it as a poet, when it makes him flag and become dull, as it does in *Merope* ; and he paid for it also as a critic. We often want to call him a bad, great critic ; he is a great critic—whenever he is a good one. It was his purpose, his moral and spiritual purpose, that made him unjust to Carlyle, Shelley, Victor Hugo, Charlotte Brontë, and Tennyson. He found it hard to like writers who seemed to ignore his own peculiar ideal or who came across the missionary twist in his composition. But then the same purpose gives to his judgments, when they are true and sound —his judgments of Homer, on Dante, and on Milton —much of their value and inspiriting power. It is a relief to find that when he is wrong, as he is about Shelley, he is wrong beyond recovery and without qualification. In the same way his poetry is in extremes. Either Apollo visits him and carries him

off, or else Apollo deserts him, finding that one 'haunt' in particular of Matthew Arnold's, namely the pulpit, is by no means 'meet' for Apollo.

Humorist as he was, with a streak of Horace in his nature, Matthew Arnold would have made excellent fun of the picture of himself as a person drearily prosing away in verse as well as in prose, in the hopes of saving a stray soul in a sleepy congregation. He knew quite well that a writer has to please; he is always talking about charm, and urbanity, and delicacy, and good temper, and he had these qualities himself, along with a certain cheerful insolence as well. Still, he regarded them very much as a means of winning men to moral and intellectual virtue. And Matthew Arnold's glory is to have commended this purpose so well; but there is something he misses, something which can best be felt by listening to the accent in which he speaks about *beauty*. He is often talking of the laws of beauty, and of the Greek instinct for beauty. And he deeply felt, and could sometimes create, both the grander and austerer sort of beauty, and the more gracious, simple, and holiday sort. It is the beauty of Pallas and Hera, or else that of the guardian gods of woods and streams, of 'Flora and the country green,' of Cumnor and Isis. Aphrodite is not there, nor the song of Pan; nor yet are any mixed and strange divinities. The word *beauty* sounds quite differently on the lips of Rossetti, or of Walter Pater, or even of Keats; who can abandon himself to sight and sound in a way which Matthew Arnold is hardly capable of doing. No doubt, by meaner men, such words as *beauty* and *beautiful* came to be made repulsive or ridiculous, and were fair game for Gilbert and Sullivan and for *Punch*. We may not ourselves care to repeat them too often; but they are the words

of a true religion nevertheless. Matthew Arnold's sacred words, however, are different; they are 'conduct' and 'righteousness', and phrases of his own coinage like 'culture' or 'sweetness and light.' Matthew Arnold repeated these expressions continually and made them pass current; which, in the approving words of Disraeli, was 'a great achievement.' He repeated them, and set people by the ears over them, much to his satisfaction; and then they began to be worn out of shape, and to become tiresome, so that it takes some courage to-day to revive them, and to urge how much truth and value is really to be found in them. But they represent a genuine religion, in which the severity of the ruling idea, that of conduct and righteousness, is softened and reinforced by the ideas of charm, of mental balance, and of trained intellectual integrity. Who can say that these conceptions are done with, or that we can all take them for granted?

III

Links between his poetry and his criticism—Heroic and dramatic pieces: *Sohrab and Rustum*; *Empedocles on Etna.*

But he began, happily, with poetry and not with religion. And he was a poet before he was a critic, which is also well. But not so long before; for the preface to his first signed book of *Poems*, in 1853, is one of his clearest statements of theory. The preface to *Merope* five years later is just as clear, and this time perversely clear. His chief deliverances as a critic, made from his chair in Oxford, precede his last, his priceless volume of verse, the *New Poems* of 1867. It is clear, then, how Matthew Arnold's poetry and his criticism interlace in point of date; and some

of the inner threads that unite them will appear presently. But first the poems may be regarded, and here it is best to follow the author's own classification. He divides them into narrative, dramatic, elegiac, and lyrical poems, and into sonnets. Out of these groups we may pick yet another, and call it *associative* poetry; it is that which tells us most about Matthew Arnold himself and his friends, and the scenes he visited. To begin, then, with the narratives.

Two of the stories, *Sohrab and Rustum* and *Balder Dead*, have the character of heroic episodes; and in both of them Matthew Arnold follows the antique model as devoutly as any poet of the Renaissance. Both are designed to be Homeric in subject, temper, plan, and diction; but Virgil, and scenery, and pathos are always breaking in. They have a similar scheme, the same sort of blank verse, and the same virtues. *Balder Dead*, for which Arnold had a special liking, is dignified; but *Sohrab and Rustum* is the more concise and vital poem of the two. It is perhaps not wholly alive, as we may feel by applying the author's own test. 'Everything depends upon the subject'; and, as King Edward the Seventh is reputed to have said to a student of Shakespeare, 'You could not have chosen a better subject.' But then who reads *Sohrab* for the subject, or for the story? The poetry, where it tells the story, hardly rises to its full level;—only once, it may be, and that is when Sohrab's soul departs

> Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
> And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

No, it is read for 'beauties' and descriptions; for the Miltonic use of melodious names, *Aralian*, *Afrasiab*, *Kai Khosroo*; for the simile of the diver, and the picture of the Oxus, which is none the less perfect for being

quite unlike the Greek manner. *Tristram and Iseult*, though noble in spirit, fails in essential passion; nor are the style and subject so nearly harmonised as in *The Sick King in Bokhara*. Here the style is natural and fluent, not epically draped at all, and prepares us for that of *The Earthly Paradise*:

> Now I at nightfall had gone forth
> Alone, and in a darksome place
> Under some mulberry-trees I found
> A little pool; and in short space
> With all the water that was there
> I fill'd my pitcher, and stole home
> Unseen; and having drink to spare,
> I hid the can behind the door,
> And went up on the roof to sleep.

As for *The Forsaken Merman*, which is not a story but a chant involving a story, its grace and half-human pathos make it a very rare thing; and further (what does not always happen with Matthew Arnold) the tune and the words, both of them almost perfect, are born together.

The preface of 1853 explains why he had suppressed *Empedocles on Etna*, which was saved at the instance of Robert Browning. The subject was wrong—almost, we might be led to fear, morally wrong. Wrong, because the reflections of Empedocles, instead of leading to anything except to the plunge in the crater, eddy round and round inconclusively; 'the suffering finds no vent in action'; or, as Matthew Arnold put it in a letter, 'everything is to be endured, nothing to be done'; whereas a poem, especially one that calls itself dramatic, ought not so to behave. Dramatic *Empedocles* is not; but the future writer of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* might well perceive its excellence. The philosophic lyric that forms the centrepiece is as rugged

and jagged and as full of matter as anything of his own. Some of it strays into unduly metrical prose. But the ruggedness befits the matter; you could not have a suave Empedocles. This lyric embodies some of the thoughts which beset Matthew Arnold himself and which recur in his verses. Age brings the decay not only of pleasures—to these, indeed, we had never any right—but of intellectual hope and of faith in the gods. The conclusion is that we should measure our aims by realities, conform inwardly to the stern law of life, and not abate our effort. Empedocles finds the strife on such terms impossible, and perishes; but not so Matthew Arnold himself, who was to work out a faith of his own of a different complexion. The setting is valley and mountain, the accompaniment is the singing of Callicles. The blank verse, describing here the Sicilian slopes, and there the days of youth in the Italian cities—which surely are Trinity, and Balliol, and Oriel, and Corpus—is of Matthew Arnold's best, and is free from the touch of self-consciousness which attends that measure in his epical experiments. Many traits and thoughts of the historical Empedocles are inlaid in the poem: the wandering mind of man which mirrors the world only in fragments, the purgatorial transmigration of the human spirit through the elements, and the evil lot of our life. But Matthew Arnold builds on all this a creed of resignation which recalls his favourite Marcus Aurelius much more than it does the ejected democrat of Agrigentum.

IV

Elegiacs; 'associative' poems; lyrics; sonnets.

In *Thyrsis*, his only elegy in the traditional form, he is safe, musically and plaintively piping down in

the water-meadows. There is no knottiness, inherent in the thought, to be got over; the difficult stave, which is that of the earlier *Scholar-Gipsy*, is nobly invented; and the Oxford country, which had been happily limned by Faber, now finds its artist. Some thought that there was too little said of Clough, and this idea occurred to Arnold himself. But Clough's ghost is there all the while, though his bones are in Florence. Together they watch the Tree on Foxcombe Hill, together they mark the traces of '*our* Scholar.' We think of Clough's own verse, of his eye for a different sort of landscape, in *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*; 'he had,' wrote Matthew Arnold, 'this idyllic side too.' *The Scholar-Gipsy*, Joseph Glanvill's gipsy, haunts both poems; but of the two, the earlier is the more symbolic, though the symbolism is not obtrusive, and it is also the more widely imaginative. In style and execution the pair match, as they are meant to do; and, for single strokes of magnificence, it is easy to confront

> Still clutching the inviolable shade

with

> The morningless and unawakening sleep
> Under the flowery oleanders pale.

Thyrsis is a true elegy; and so, on another scale, are the beautiful Heinesque *Requiescat* and the pious lines on the author's brother, *A Southern Night*. But elegy and lyric fade off into the poetic form, itself of no little range and variety, which I have called 'associative.' Here the ethical and reflective element easily overpowers the elegiac. The poet circles round a place, or a person, or both: the Grande Chartreuse, or Haworth and the Brontës, or Montmartre and Heine, or Rugby and Thomas Arnold. Some of these subjects

might seem more tractable in prose; and they might have gone better, with only a touch or two changed, into one of Matthew Arnold's skilful, *numerous* periods, than into verse which is sometimes uncertain, and, to speak frankly, jaw-breaking:

> But something prompts me: Not thus
> Take leave of Heine, not thus
> Speak the last word at his grave!
> Not in pity and not
> With half censure—with awe
> Hail, as it passes from earth
> Scattering lightnings, that soul!

This painful effect occurs above all in the metre, of triple beat and unrhymed, which Matthew Arnold seems to have invented, and which he likes to use for intimate utterance. Its danger is ungainliness; but 'the strong passion,' it has been well said by Mr. Saintsbury, 'fuses it' into 'something grave and noble in *Rugby Chapel*. There the metre turns to a slow marching or climbing chant, comparable to that of *A Grammarian's Funeral*, as the thinned mountaineers, after the journey of life, come at last 'to the lonely inn 'mid the rocks.' To grandeur of spirit Matthew Arnold often approaches, to grandeur of form less often; but here the form responds. And it responds again, in another way, in the *Fragment of a Chorus of a 'Dejaneira*,' which is in a style that would serve well for a translation of Sophocles; and in *Dover Beach*, with the *Lycidas-like* rhymes on 'the sea of faith' with 'its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar.'

Other poems are in stanzas that lend themselves to the panel-pictures—something like Tennyson's, but simpler and more straightforward—in which Matthew Arnold excels:

And the domed Velan with his snows
Behind the upcrowding hills
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills.

These Alpine passages in *Obermann once More*, and others in *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, are true poetry; while the verses on the Roman noble, and on Byron and Shelley, which show the same kind of skill, are but splendid poetic eloquence. Both pieces reveal the solitary-mindedness of the writer, and his disenchanted romanticism. Romance has gone, faith has gone, a new faith has not come, and there is no spiritual resting-place, not even—nay, not at all—in monastic peace. The lines portraying the work done by Christ in the world forecast the tone of Matthew Arnold's theological prose; and his tolerance of the old faith has its root more in poetic than in intellectual sympathy. There is plenty of mountain air in *Obermann* and the *Stanzas*, but never so much lyrical energy as in the earlier series called *Switzerland*. This, be it a record of experience or no, is full of young, direct, and genuine emotion, and also contains at least one outburst—'Yes! in the sea of life enisled,' which is passionate and resonant beyond Matthew Arnold's habit.

As to his lyrical faculty, which seldom reaches the point of *singing*, and is always being arrested by thinking, and too rarely sweeps the thought along with it—this faculty, it may be, works most freely in unexpected places. The pensive poet can be moved to indignation:

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

This is a ringing cry, as of a 'soldier in the Liberation War of humanity'; and the religion of culture would be none the worse for a little more of it. Though smothered up in his praises of sweetness and urbanity, it is a healthy strain always latent in Matthew Arnold. It breaks out again in *A Wish*, where he prays that in his last hour he may keep away from the doctor and also from 'his brother doctor of the soul.' The wish was granted in a sense, for he died suddenly near the Mersey and the 'wide aerial landscape spread.' There is another kind of sharpness in the lines entitled *Old*, published when he was only forty-five. They prophesy for himself a palsy and apathy of spirit of which he was never to be in danger. Matthew Arnold's ear was sometimes imperfect; he is capable of such a hissing line as 'My melancholy, sciolists say.' But this defect has been exaggerated; and his real defect is not so much that he is unmusical as that the movement of his verse is often that of high prose rather than of poetry. Hence the presence of verse strikes us as accidental. Unawares, he speaks rather than chants. But his best things are not thus disabled; and on his own upland of contemplative, intellectually impassioned poetry, and in purity of tone and colour, he has few companions.

Not all the best of his sonnets are inspired by Wordsworth. The greatest of them, though not verbally perfect, is surely that on Shakespeare. It contains none of the critical reserves which always weaken poetry; and there is no cult in it—nothing about the value of poetry for the higher life, or about the equivalence of poetry and religion. The spirit of it is 'free,' and therefore the less 'abides our question.' The third sonnet, on *Rachel* ('Sprung from the blood of Israel's scatter'd race'), has some of the same quality;

but *Austerity of Poetry* and *East London* are the most harmoniously built of those in the orthodox form.

V

Felicity of nature; his English scenery, and Tennyson's.

So far as we can judge, there was a singular and happy absence of dark corners in Matthew Arnold's nature and imagination. Scorn is there, and satire, and melancholy; yet there is nothing of the strain which we find in every other poet of the same time or rank —in such work as *Guido Franceschini*, or *The Bride's Prelude*, or *Faustine*. He felt 'the sick hurry, the divided aim,' and how the time was out of joint; but there are many kinds of fever of which he must have had little apprehension. This may be guessed, if we compare his *Empedocles* with Tennyson's *Lucretius*. Nor does he show any liking for such an element in the work of others. This deficiency is one of Matthew Arnold's great charms. When we have had enough of tragedy or pathology it is a relief to turn and listen to his pure, sound strain:

> Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,
> And faint the city gleams;
> Rare the lone pastoral huts—marvel not thou!
> The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
> But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams;
> Alone the sun arises, and alone
> Spring the great streams.

These lines are from an early piece; so soon are the distinctive mood and style of the poet perceptible. And another of Matthew Arnold's traits, his special intimacy with nature, and his power of making nature poetical, is plain from the first; and it is found also

in his prose. In the essay on George Sand there is a page which has the charm of *Thyrsis*, on the river-country of Berry with its ' shelving gravel and yellow wagtails.' The East he had not visited, but those who knew it praised the veracity of the descriptions, taken from books, in *Sohrab and Rustum*. Still, in spite of the ' beds of sand and matted rushy isles ' of the Oxus, the landscape is more general than in the Swiss or English poems. And of these the foreign pictures are the more rapidly done, and have the movement of travel in them ; but the Thames valley, long known and haunted, is Matthew Arnold's chosen plot, and he has given eyes to those who knew it already. It is here natural to think of Tennyson ; and, while both poets are at their best in this kind of work, Tennyson, with his concentrated vision, gives us, at the end of it, the pleasure of ' many a golden phrase,' always a little curious ; but Matthew Arnold is the more transparent in his language, and so makes us think less about the words and more of the scene. His simplicity seems to be no trouble to him, and there is abundance of air and colour :

Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering
Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass.

But with all their differences the two poets, considered as painters, have one thing in common. They are more English than anybody, as English as Constable. In English scenery, said Alfred de Vigny, we feel everywhere the hand of man ; *tant mieux ; partout ailleurs la nature stupide nous insulte assez.* The same gift, however, is found in *The Church of Brou*, which the poet, as he afterwards said, ' found he had

described wrongly' ; for the pines and valleys of the poem are not at Brou at all, but in Edgar Quinet's prose whence Arnold took the description. Yet he never wrote better rhymed verse than in *The Church of Brou :*

So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble Pair !
Or, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair
On the carved western front a flood of light
Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright
Prophets, transfigured Saints, and Martyrs brave,
In the vast western window of the nave.

VI

State of criticism, 1830–1850—Keble ; Brimley.

Matthew Arnold, during the third quarter of the century, changed the whole complexion of English criticism. In the second quarter the art had declined. The romantic discoverers, Lamb and his company, had departed, with the exception of De Quincey and Leigh Hunt, who just kept the good tradition alive. Macaulay and Carlyle had spoken, but neither was a critic first and foremost. The official reviews in the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh* are now dead reading, and even a man of talent like Lockhart is weighed down by his atmosphere. There is sense and scholarship in the articles of Whitwell Elwin, the editor and prosecutor of Pope, and in the essays of James Hannay. But the gap is filled, and the position saved, by two or three critics, whom I name not in order to show the nakedness of the land, but as a reminder of their almost forgotten merits. Of these the most remarkable is John Keble. Unluckily, he spoke in Latin. His *Prælectiones Academicae* were given from the Oxford Chair of Poetry during the years 1832 to 1841 and published in 1844. There is now a translation,

by another hand. Had they been in English Keble would at once have taken his proper rank. In more than one respect he leads the way to Matthew Arnold. He, too, leans upon the Greeks, and dedicates his work to Wordsworth as a provider not only of sweet poetry but of sacred truth. As we should expect, he dwells on the composing and curative power of the art. But Keble at one point goes deeper than Matthew Arnold, when he proclaims that poetry, of the great and 'primary' kind, must always have its origin in 'passion.' Such is the poetry of Homer, Æschylus, and Dante. Deficient in this essential, Horace and Dryden fall into a secondary class. Keble, as is natural, tends to identify poetic and religious utterance; and this, again, is a certain link with his successor. But we see how his sympathies are wider than his theories when we find him quoting the song of Ragnar Lodbrog and alluding to the songs of Lapps and Polynesians.

Also there is the little sheaf of essays published in 1850 by George Brimley, the librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge. This delicate and neat-handed man of letters deserves study, and his writing, though unobtrusive, is full of life. He is much nearer than Matthew Arnold to the truth about Shelley, when he cries, in the year 1851:

> After the passions and the theories which supplied Shelley with the subject-matter of his poems have died away and become mere matter of history, there will still remain a song such as mortal man never sung before, of inarticulate rapture and of freezing pain—of a blinding light of truth and a dazzling weight of glory, translated into English speech, as coloured as a painted window, as suggestive, as penetrating, as intense as music.

A little later we find Brimley sturdily refusing to join in the chorus against *Maud*, or in those epithets of 'morbid' and 'hysterical' which really point to the dramatic virtue of the poem. His view, indeed, is usually free and disinterested. But Brimley's range was not wide, he produced little, and his subjects are nearly all English. Even while he wrote, Matthew Arnold had begun to discourse upon the Greek harmony of structure and the 'grand style' of Homer and his peers. It is plain how the *Preface* of 1853, the lectures on Homer, and the *Essays in Criticism*, were to enlarge the horizon. The only critic whom we can for a moment associate with Matthew Arnold during the decade of the fifties is Walter Bagehot, whose work Arnold himself admired. Bagehot's literary papers have lived, and he has never been fully studied; but they only show one brilliant facet of his mind, and he was called away to other fields.

VII

Matthew Arnold's critical canons: need of design in poetry; the test applied—The 'grand style'—*Lectures on Translating Homer*; the question of metre; Sir S. Ferguson quoted—Use of test passages, its drawback.

The examples of Homer and Sophocles, then, lie behind much of Matthew Arnold's criticism, as they do behind some of his poetry; and so do the examples of Dante and Milton. These are the masters who bring him to insist first of all on the necessity of design, proportion, and wholeness in a poem, and then on the continued presence of the grand or high style, or else of one that has charm and magic. They also bring him to insist on poetry being a 'criticism of life.' These are the three great articles of his creed;

he draws many lines of connexion between them, and it is easy to misunderstand them apart.

It was no new thing to preach structure and unity. The Renaissance, with its eye on the great old models, had done so; and though Matthew Arnold did not study the Renaissance very much—indeed, he was shy of it—still he is obeying one of its ruling passions, and is therein a true man of the Renaissance. But then ages had come between. The neo-classical centuries had worshipped structure, building on Aristotle with theological licence, and disguising his teaching almost out of knowledge. The result became petrified and pedantic; the rules of tragedy, the rules of the epic, had reduced themselves to absurdities, and the world grew sick of them. Lessing did something to explode them. The strongest heads of the 'age of prose,' such as Johnson, in the end gave them up. The romantic age followed; and Coleridge renewed the conception of unity and design in a larger sense, finding those qualities in Shakespeare, not as imposed by rule, but as developed through a living inherent law. But the romantic poets themselves, in their longer and more imposing works, forgot these virtues again, as is evident in *The Prelude*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and *Don Juan*; in Byron's medley, indeed, the absence of design is part of the programme. It is in well-made works of the middle scale like *The Ancient Mariner* or *Michael* that these virtues do appear and shine; and still more in shorter works like the odes of Keats or the lyrics of Shelley. The *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* have a true pattern and unity of their own.

Well, Matthew Arnold, nursed on the Greeks and Dante, and reacting, as we have seen, against many things in the romantic poetry, fastened on its want of large design and structure. In his preface of 1853

he puts his case with a plainness and point that he never afterwards surpassed; and he also put it, more formally, in his preface to *Merope*. It was a service to draw men's admiration back from beauty of detail to the artistic whole, and to the eternal qualities of the ancient writings from the neo-classic travesty of them. Arnold does not apply his criticism to the more ambitious poems of his own time; but in fact it condemns them. Think of *Idylls of the King* or even of *Sigurd the Volsung*, from the point of view of harmonious proportion, unity, and design, and not one of them will hold water for a moment. *The Life and Death of Jason* is a partial exception; *The Ring and the Book* is a real one. But, once more, it is mostly the works of middle or lesser scale, like *Sohrab and Rustum* itself, that are really well put together. And this is also true of most of our poetry since Matthew Arnold's time.

The exposition of the 'grand style' is to be found in the lectures *On Translating Homer* and in their sequel *Last Words*; and the same idea is expanded and qualified in *The Study of Poetry*:

> The grand style arises in poetry *when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject.*

This is the conclusion, and the lectures on Homer lead up to it. They form one of the most satisfactory efforts in the language, since Coleridge's chapters on Wordsworth, and along with Pater's paper on *Style*, to work out a critical problem. True, Matthew Arnold has not, like Coleridge, a large metaphysical background of ideas—he has not that sort of wheelwork in his head at all; but then for his purpose he does not much need it, and he is in no danger of slipping

into philosophic jargon, as Coleridge too easily does. Also he is talking of something that has to be *done* ; not simply of what has been the wrong way, but what is to be the right way, of getting Homer into English with as little loss as possible. What are the right diction, movement, and metre for that enterprise ?

Homer is rapid in his movement, Homer is plain in his words and style, Homer is simple in his ideas, Homer is noble in his manner.

Matthew Arnold's exposition and illustration of these qualities, his weighing and contrasting of Chapman, Pope, Cowper, and other translators according as they attain to or miss them, and his discussion of the metrical problem, still hold the field. There are but two drawbacks to these *Lectures*. One is the carping at Francis Newman, whose version, after all, no one took very seriously—it would have died of itself ; there is a certain strain of bullying and inurbanity, which Matthew Arnold justly denounced in other people, and which is not cancelled by his half-apologies. The other drawback, as he saw, is his own hexameter translations, which have neither a good Greek nor a good English rhythm. They are far less musical and effective than the Spenserian stanzas of Philip James Worsley, whose version of the *Odyssey* appeared in 1861 just after the *Lectures*. Arnold had dismissed this complex stanza as a vehicle for Homeric translation on grounds of which Worsley well disposes in his preface, and which Arnold, in a reply, does not, I think, really sustain. His formal criticism is as good as Matthew Arnold's own when he pleads that

whatever objections may be urged against a rhymed translation of Homer diminish in weight precisely as

the correspondences become more and more involved; though it is doubtful whether such involutions could safely be carried beyond the limits laid down by Spenser. It is one great merit of the Spenserian stanza, that the number of styles possible under the laws which it introduces is practically unlimited.

It is also true that the real proof is in the result. Worsley's version of the tale of Nausicaa, or of the garden of Calypso, is rich, sweet, and above all natural. And the associations of the stanza well suit the temper of these parts of the *Odyssey*, though they may not so well suit the *Iliad*.

Yet I believe that the true measure for Homeric translation is still Chapman's—Chapman's, purged of the roughness and fantastic sallies, the gnarls and interruptions, with which Chapman defaced it. These faults of his blind us to the excellence of his fourteen-syllabled line, usually broken at the eighth syllable. It is a near equivalent to the hexameter in the amount of matter it contains; it admits of much continuity as well of salient single lines; and it gets the onset and directness of the hexameter, although, no doubt, missing the rushing ripple of the dactyl. But then the dactyl is very expensive to reproduce in English at all. No, before we prefer any other measure, let us have a whole book of Homer done by a sufficient scholar-poet into a style like this:

The Princess with her women-train without the fort
he found,
Beside a limpid running stream, upon the primrose
ground;
In two ranks seated opposite, with soft alternate stroke
Of bare, white, counter-thrusting feet, fulling a splendid
cloak

Fresh from the loom; incessant rolled athwart the fluted board
The thick web fretted, while two maids, with arms uplifted, poured
Pure water on it diligently, and to their moving feet
In answering verse they sang a chaunt of cadence pure and sweet.

These lines are taken from Sir Samuel Ferguson's *Congal*, published in 1872. He hardly keeps up this excellent style, though his aim was to be as Homeric as possible. Yet in such a passage there is little to wish away, in verse or language, before we are reminded of Homer. Another medium might be the *Sigurd* measure used by Morris for translating the *Odyssey*. Matthew Arnold had not this alternative before him. The *Sigurd* measure has many advantages and felicities; but the diffuseness of Morris, and his special diction, do not suit Homer; and it is difficult to think these peculiarities away and to judge how far the measure, without them, would serve for Homer in English.

Arnold's *Lectures* gave the impulse to all discussion of this kind; and they are so excellent not only because they contribute to the subject, but because they stick to the subject. There is nothing in them about culture and conduct or about poetry being the essence of religion, and there is no polite scarifying of John Bull. Nor has the writer's way of balancing and comparing yet become as mechanical as it does afterwards in his studies of Byron and Wordsworth. The *Lectures* lead up to his amended description of the 'grand style'; this, like all Matthew Arnold's formulæ, can be neither ignored nor accepted, so that one critic more must now needs vex himself over it.

It is easy to pick holes in it, and to say that he

describes, not the grand style at all, but the conditions of its appearance, namely the 'noble and poetically gifted nature,' and the adequate and serious subject; and that he then gives two of its attributes, alternatively, namely 'simplicity and severity'; so that we never get to the grand style itself at all. But then he says, what is true, that you can only feel it, not define it, and that you can only feel it through examples. These, then, he provides; these he reiterates; and he works through them steadily, saying that

if we have any tact, we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently.

It was not Matthew Arnold's fault if he did not 'lodge them in our minds'; and his examples roused ample debate, as he desired. He finds other examples when he quits the region of grandeur for that of charm, felicity, and 'natural magic.' And he chooses his lines well; but the whole procedure, especially in his later essays, like those on Byron, Wordsworth, Goethe, and Milton, where he plays off against one another the test-passages not only from these poets, but from their critics—becomes too talismanic and dexterous, and also too arbitrary. For one thing, the examples are too short, and 'single lines' cannot 'serve our purpose quite sufficiently.' If we are to have a talisman, a whole speech of Satan or Macbeth is a better one; for grandeur or charm of style cannot be severed from grandeur or charm of rhythm, and in a line or two rhythm cannot find proper scope, or its expressive power be judged.

VIII

'Criticism of life'—*Celtic Literature*—First series of *Essays in Criticism*; federal ideal of literature.

The description of poetry as a 'criticism of life' has been much battered, and people have exhausted themselves in saying that the novel also is a criticism of life, and that so are the Ten Commandments, and that poetry is art and not criticism. All this is too true; but it is more to the purpose to add that there was nothing else for Matthew Arnold to say, once he was pressed to explain what he really valued in poetry. By a criticism of life he meant something that would illumine and inspire us in the highest degree for the business of living. This includes not poetry only, but all high literature. Such an extension is familiar to us in minds like those of Sidney and Shelley and their ancestor Plato. And high literature really gave Matthew Arnold his working religion. We see this by glancing at his notebooks, where he put down a *pensée* from Pascal, or Johnson, or the Vulgate, or Goethe, to carry him through each of his hard professional days. And a very good religion it is. But it can only, we are told, be good for a small handful of mankind. 'Ah! yes, but then,' replies Matthew Arnold in effect, 'I say not only that poetry is a religion, but that religion, that is, the real, essential, though often unconscious part of religion, is just poetry; and that is what the multitude really live by, though they do not know it. So let us purge their religion of its false doctrine, and they will get nearer to the real essence of it; and then poetry and religion will meet at last, like long-sundered lovers.' This application of course does not come out clearly till he begins to write on theology; but it is implicit

from the first. I must keep, however, for the moment to his literary judgments.

In the lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* he frisks wildly about his theme; and how far he knew any of the originals in Welsh and Irish remains obscure. He expands into humorous and shaky race-theorising —one of his most serious intellectual faults. He canters round and round in a wonderful circle. Take a few examples from Celtic poetry, and find in them a certain quality, say 'natural magic.' Lay down that this can only be 'Celtic'; and then, when you find anything like it in a 'Saxon' such as Shakespeare or Keats, say that such a 'Saxon' *cannot* in himself possess that quality and can only have 'got' it from the Celtic strain in him. The Celtic scholars have always smiled at Matthew Arnold's commentary, but they have been grateful to him; and well they may be. The praise of 'Ossian,' the true sympathy with the Welsh spirit and genius, the delightful quotations, the opening up of a fresh, endless field of letters, hardly known at all except to those learned persons—what could better earn their gratitude? Matthew Arnold was prompted to this venture by an essay of Rénan, to whom he acknowledges his debts and affinities. In his hands, Rénan's irony becomes a sharper, and sometimes a heavier, kind of banter.

In the first series of *Essays in Criticism*, which brought Arnold into reputation as a prose writer and which are still wonderfully fresh, we see his conception of criticism and its business. It is a temper of mind, he says,

> which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result.

It is the temper of 'seeing the thing as it really is'; of keeping the mind a clean mirror, untarnished by personal, national, provincial, or doctrinal prejudice. Others, like Mill or Huxley, might cultivate this temper in philosophy or science; their material lay in the facts of nature, or in the forces of history. Matthew Arnold's material lies in 'the best that is known and thought in the world.' And the method of getting at this 'best' is that of comparison. It resembles and is suggested by the method of Sainte-Beuve, and the *Essays in Criticism* are a variety of the *causerie*.

Sainte-Beuve lived till 1869 and went on writing to the last; he knew and appreciated Matthew Arnold, who wrote after his death an admirable sketch of him and termed him 'the master of us all in criticism.' But Sainte-Beuve has no mission, and treats his readers as urbane and rational already. Matthew Arnold tries to scold and banter them into becoming so; and he has his mission, which is to enforce his ideas of culture, literature, and the intellectual life. Hence his *Essays* are not *causeries* pure and simple at all. They are a salad, most ingeniously mixed, of jests, eloquence, topical allusion, disquisition on the national failings, literary judgments, and lofty idealism, which finds salvation in letters and culture. He adopted what he calls 'my sinuous, easy, unpolemical mode of proceeding,' which disconcerted both opponents and imitators. Some of the subjects had the charm of discoveries. No one in England seemed to have heard of Joubert, with his beautiful intelligence and nature. French readers were shocked at seeing Joubert named in the same breath with Pascal; but he was a discovery all the same, and so were the De Guérins, brother and sister. Matthew Arnold wrote on them with happy sympathy. But, while

he praised these retired spirits, he could slight Victor Hugo and Racine. He managed to combine a true feeling for French prose with a singular deafness to the form and the spirit of French verse. Yet he had heard Rachel and Sarah Bernhardt.

The essay on *The Influence of Academies* is an attempt to reform the blatant and metallic reviewing that still survived, and to put the merely rhetorical gift, as Arnold judged it, of writers like Kinglake and Macaulay, in its place. It may be a true bill against Kinglake; but Macaulay stands much firmer than Matthew Arnold thought. The opening essay, on *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, sets forth with real power the federal ideal of thought and literature, drawn from the study of 'Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome,' and also of Persia and Britain. Matthew Arnold thus enlarged the whole field of critical vision. As he states it, his aim sounds too much for our short life. But it is his contribution to the English thought of his age, and it was probably suggested to him by Goethe. The way to realise it is, he tells us, by constantly comparing. We are to draw on all these great writers and religious founders, in order to attain not a body of formal truth but a temper and a critical *organon*, which will keep us from harbouring wrong admirations in life and literature and set us in the right way. Spinoza and Marcus Aurelius thus join the company of torchbearers.

IX

Other criticisms: on Shelley; on Sainte-Beuve.

Matthew Arnold keeps closest to pure criticism in his papers on Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Gray,

and in *The Study of Poetry*. These are collected in the second series of *Essays in Criticism*; and behind them may be ranked the studies of Tolstoy, Amiel, Emerson, George Sand, and of the critics of Goethe and Milton. The method varies a good deal. In the *Gray* and the *Keats* it is concise, and is all the better for that; moving still from quotation to quotation, from formula to formula, swinging between praises and reserves in a way that became widely but not well imitated, and ending on a generous note. *The Study of Poetry* is a chapter of *poetic*, a confession of faith, concerning the uses and destinies of poetry and the tests of its excellence. This essay, prefixed to Ward's *English Poets*, did more than anything else to spread Matthew Arnold's ideas broadcast. In the *Emerson*, which heads the *Discourses in America*, there is more personal reminiscence. Much of its interest lies in the pages on Carlyle, for whom Matthew Arnold had never greatly cared, but whom he now salutes with more cordiality, and perhaps with a sense of not having done him justice before; and in those on Newman, for whom he had much of the old Oxford leniency and reverence. In *George Sand* he tells of his visit to Nohant; in another article he honours her at the expense of Balzac, whom he cries down, as we might, alas! expect; and he predicts, most dangerously, that George Sand will outlive Balzac. In the papers on *Amiel* and on *Count Leo Tolstoi* he is once more an introducer. Matthew Arnold tells a story well, and his sketch of *Anna Karénina* would be a model if he had not contrived to put a touch of patronage into his pity for 'Poor Anna.'

He also reviewed expertly, though not often. He praised Stopford Brooke's little *Primer of English Literature*; and, writing in the last years of his life,

he did not praise Dowden's *Life of Shelley*. The biographer, who otherwise did his work well, had sentimentalised. In producing his painful new material, he had seemed to evade what was indefensible in Shelley's behaviour to his first wife; and he is duly beaten for doing so. But Matthew Arnold could never value Shelley properly; and, since it would take too long to examine all his antipathies—which are as interesting as Johnson's and never merely freakish—let us choose Shelley for an example.

Those who extol him as the poet of clouds, the poet of sunsets, are only saying that he did not, in fact, lay hold upon the poet's right subject-matter; and, in honest truth, with all his charm of soul and spirit, and with all his gift of musical diction and movement, he never, or hardly ever, did. Except, as I have said, for a few short things and single passages, his poetry is less satisfactory than his translations; for in these the subject-matter was found for him.

And then we hear that Shelley's letters may well outlive his poetry. This, in effect, is the reasoned defence of the famous sentence on the 'beautiful and ineffectual angel.' I shall not argue for Shelley; Swinburne has answered the case once for all; and besides, *securus judicat orbis*. It is, however, strange that such a hoper for mankind as Matthew Arnold saw nothing in Shelley's gospel. Why was it? One is tempted at first to say it was sheer Whiggery, the impatience of the English gentleman with Shelley's 'set' and 'world' and the free Italian life; or again, that it was lack of ear. But it is something more than that, and the clue is found in a letter of 1865, where Arnold speaks of the need

to keep pushing on one's posts into the darkness, and to establish no post that is not perfectly in light and

firm. One gains nothing on the darkness, by being, like Shelley, as incoherent as the darkness itself.

That is it. You cannot formulate Shelley, or put him into a *pensée* to get through the day with. He is drink, not meat. He is 'incoherent as the darkness itself.' But then, we answer, so is the sunrise 'incoherent,' and so is the 'prophet of Israel's restoration.' Nothing can better show the concrete and ethical turn of Matthew Arnold's mind than these deliverances. In his 'notebooks' there are passages from *Rasselas*; and there was a good solid eighteenth-century strain in him, poet as he was; and when he talked about the 'age of prose and reason,' it was this strain that gave discipline, force, and pungency to his own prose. In his preface to the *Six Lives* from Johnson he pays his tribute to that age.

Yet this is only one side of Matthew Arnold, and not the one we finally think of when we watch him at work as a critic. He is truly of the tribe of Sainte-Beuve, to whom one always comes back. And with far less psychology, flexibility, and science than Sainte-Beuve, he has, at his best, a loftier view, and, in the phrase of his favourite Goethe, a more 'panoramic' one. We see this in his notable words on Sainte-Beuve himself, which are a good instance of his style. It is not free from the repetitions of phrase which became his trick, and which, like a number of reflecting mirrors, distract us from the clear sculptured outline of his thought:

> As a guide to bring us to a knowledge of the French genius and literature he is unrivalled—perfect, so far as a poor mortal critic can be perfect, in knowledge of his subject, in judgment, in tact, and tone. Certain spirits are of an excellence almost ideal in certain lines; the human race might willingly adopt them as

its spokesmen, recognising that on these lines their style and utterance may stand as those, not of bounded individuals, but of the human race. So Homer speaks for the human race, and with an excellence which is ideal, in epic narration; Plato in the treatment at once beautiful and profound of philosophical questions; Shakespeare in the presentation of human character; Voltaire in light verse and ironical discussion. A list of perfect ones, indeed, each in his own line! and we may almost venture to add to their number, in his line of literary criticism, Sainte-Beuve.

X

Religious writings: formulæ, method, and standpoint—Social and educational works.

Arnold's excursions into theology, social preaching, and politics fill many of his volumes, and are sometimes called a mere sojourn in the wilderness; but this is an erroneous view. They contain some of his best exposition and satire; he put his heart into them, and they made their mark on opinion. It is true that they are journalism—though often good and superlative journalism, being addressed to a phase of living thought. They are therefore largely written on the dust. Matthew Arnold is here inspired by his faith in the saving power of literature and poetry. Read the Bible, he says, in that light; it gives us 'morality touched with emotion,' and poetry, both in the grand style. Find the secret of Israel in his sublime expression of the need of mankind for righteousness. Study the books of both Isaiahs in their historical setting, using modern criticism, and correcting the Authorised Version sparely and tactfully. In the two little volumes *The Great Prophecy of Israel's*

Restoration and *Isaiah of Jerusalem* Matthew Arnold makes this experiment. Find, he proceeds, the secret of the Gospels in the 'sweet reasonableness' and other qualities of Jesus, using the same methods and safeguards; and find the secret of Paul in his deep, mystical, and unmethodised apprehension of the appeal of 'rich single words,' like *faith*, *grace*, *love*, or *the will of God*, in which he develops the 'secret of Jesus.' Do all this keeping your head and literary sense, knowing that Israel and Jesus do not 'Hellenise,' or make refined and connected systems, and seeing clearly when Paul Hellenises and when he 'Hebraises,' and then you will be on the track, at any rate, of true religion, of the only religion which can survive the accretions that have gathered round the popular cult. Such is the broad sense of *St. Paul and Protestantism*, of *Literature and Dogma*, and *God and the Bible*.

In preaching all this, Matthew Arnold cut clean across the recognised schools of English opinion. He is far from the philosophic liberals, the men of science, and the positivists. Yet, after all, with these last he has certain affinities. He called Comte a 'grotesque old French pedant' in his cheerful way, and he was assailed by devotees for his flippancy. Behold, they said, society groaning and travailing, 'and me'—so Arnold expressed their charge—'me, in the midst of the general tribulation, handing out my pouncet-box.' Still, his large and catholic conception of literature and his effort to save and clear the ancient sources of religious emotion bring him much nearer to the 'cult of humanity' than to the scientific liberals. He has also certain ties with the Broad Churchmen; but he was outside the fold, he was free, and he threw over the whole cargo of orthodox doctrine in a way that staggered the compromisers. He is, in fact, very

like an agnostic, though he would have positively reared at the description. Miracles must go; they 'do not happen,' and we know how men come to believe in them. The official creeds must go; they are the creations of 'pseudo-science.' What we are sure of is the working of an 'eternal law, not ourselves,' impersonal it appears, though naturally and inevitably personified, and 'making for righteousness.' If religion, as a motive power, is to be saved, it must be transformed in this sense.

All this is set forth with point and eloquence, but with a relentless iteration and flogging of the key-phrases, and with remarkably little of the 'charm' and 'persuasiveness' which he was always preaching. But Matthew Arnold perplexed his position, and also his readers, by his practical conservatism. He is all for keeping up the ordinary religious language, and also in some improved form, the Church of England. That Church has not been too grateful for his consideration. He was consistent in his way; he thought that, for England, the Church of England was the best and safest depositary of culture; and he wanted to save culture, which the Nonconformists, with their bleak antipathy to its charm, would never do. Salvation, so we make out, involving the rescue of religion from the radicals, the pedants, and the men of science on the one side, and from the Nonconformists on the other, is to come from a renewed Church of England, which shall be cleared of legendary theology, and which shall work freely on the national mind through its reformed apprehension of what Israel, Jesus, and Paul really meant; being aided thereto, above all, by a study of the 'best that has been said and thought in the world.' This was the way in which the English soul should, and could, be reanimated. And the man

who propounded all this thought Shelley a dreamer!

In *Culture and Anarchy* he rings the changes again on Hebraism and Hellenism, and on a new set of phrases also. We hear of the materialised upper class, the vulgarised middle class, the brutalised lower class: Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. It is a rather dull book with lively passages. The satire on the middle class is brisker in that odd, almost faded *jeu d'esprit*, which still contains some good reading, called *Friendship's Garland*, with its imaginary professor and his comments on British society and education. On education Matthew Arnold wrote a great deal. He was for forty years an inspector of elementary schools, and some of his reports have been published. He went to France and Germany, there to investigate education officially, and his book on *Higher Schools and Universities* in those countries is the fruit; he wrote articles, too, like *A French Eton* and *Porro Unum est Necessarium*. All this may be taken as part of his effort to bring home to his countrymen the best that had been thought, and said, and done, for their example.

The result is valuable if not always literature. He saw some of the problems clearly. He saw how the public schools and old universities were a preserve for certain classes, not for the nation; and how, even there, humanism itself was deadened by some of the ancestral recipes for producing it. He saw the absence, above all in the universities, of instruction in the realities of antiquity; he saw the weariness and futility for the mass of pupils of much 'composition.' The son of Thomas Arnold could never forget how his father had quickened the teaching of history and religion, not only for Rugby, but for England; and so to his mother he writes:

My one feeling when I close the book [J. T. Coleridge's *Memoirs of Keble*] is of papa's immense superiority to all the set, mainly because, owing to his historic sense, he was so wonderfully, for his nation, time, and profession, European ; and thus so got himself out of the narrow medium in which, after all, his English friends lived.

The two little editions of Isaiah show the same impulse of the educator, which was perhaps the deepest thing in Matthew Arnold when he was not, and sometimes also when he was, a poet.

His value as an educational reformer was impaired in several ways. He did not understand the spirit or the value of science ; and though he made his bow to it, he was inclined to set it in a false and needless opposition to the humanities. He also had a strong anti-English bias, and fell in love with the foreign bureaucratic organisation, without really studying it long or seeing that England would never digest it. He was apt to have the State on the brain. He saw how well the State might organise, but not how horribly it might meddle. Still, he did more than anybody to interest the reading public in education, and much to temper the dreariness of the topic for human perusal. This was no slight service. Working as he did under the yoke of a system he disapproved, and before free education and its effects had prevailed, he wrote much that is now only of historical interest. But his professional reports are full of light and humanity ; he is always for the living word and the quickening spirit, never for mechanism and the dead ' result ' ; and this is the epitaph which he would have preferred.

Matthew Arnold's politics need only be glanced at. He wrote more than once on Ireland, with less sym-

pathy than he supposed. He wanted a new temper towards Ireland to arise in England, and saw that there was the difficulty; but when it came to the point he shook his head over the charming Celt, and took, like many others, a strong Whig line. In this department his genius is not seen at work. He admired Burke, but his political utterances never have the stamp that we find in Burke's most casual pamphlets.

XI

Summary.

On the morrow of his death Matthew Arnold was saluted in the press as 'a guide, a representative, a glory' of his country. He had become an institution, all the more that, like a true Briton and his father's son, he had turned aside from pure letters into the public fray. Hardly any other critic was widely read before the arrival of Pater; except Macaulay, who was read by the multitude. English society felt that Arnold was a poet who had a right to talk about poetry, a thinker who derided philosophy, a scholar without being a pagan, an eminent public servant with a good conservative streak in him; and that no one had, no one deserved, more friends. There was, indeed, his odd religion; some thought he had too much religion, some that he had too little. But, to the earnest reader, he seemed mysteriously to be on the right side after all. When attacked, he 'only took snuff,' smiled, and reiterated generally. The 'great middle class,' when it did read him, rather liked his jibes and 'far-singing arrows,' and went on as before, every one thinking that the hits at other people were very good. All this made Matthew Arnold a

considerable and attractive figure. But we like best to think of him as what George Sand called him, a *jeune Milton voyageant*, in his youthful and melancholy ferment of thought, before he had discovered the creed of culture; seeing himself on the frontier between two faiths, the one extinct, the other hardly born; feeling 'the expiring wave of the mighty influence' of Byron; going night after night to see Rachel act, and reading the 'too bold dying song' of Emily Brontë, which, he tells us, 'stirr'd, like a clarion-blast, my soul'; and solitary-minded, with something of Alfred de Vigny in him, and something of Keats. And all the time, all his life, there hovered before him the true artist's ideal of what he himself calls 'the law of pure and flawless workmanship'; and that is Matthew Arnold's real praise.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

(*Dates are those of publication, unless otherwise noted.*)

TENNYSON

1809. Aug. 6, Alfred Tennyson born at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire, son of Rev. George Clayton Tennyson and his wife Elizabeth (Fytche).

1816–20. Louth Grammar School. Precocious versifying, and study of the poets.

1820–8. Home education ; wide reading ; influence of native scenery.

1826 (dated 1827). *Poems by Two Brothers*, published at Louth (actually two besides Alfred : Frederick Tennyson, 1807–98 ; and Charles [afterwards Charles Tennyson Turner], 1808–79).

1828. Trinity College, Cambridge, with the two brothers ; friendship with Arthur Henry Hallam, Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), James Spedding, etc. ; and later with Edward FitzGerald.

1829. *Timbuctoo.* Chancellor's prize medal.

1830. *Poems, chiefly Lyrical.* Charles Tennyson, *Sonnets.*

1830. Travel in Spain with Hallam ; they aid the rebel Torrijos.

1831. Death of father. 1830–7. At Somersby.

1832. *Poems* (dated 1833) ; hostility of *Quarterly Review.*

1833. Death of Arthur Hallam at Vienna. 1834, etc. : *In Memoriam* begun, also *Idylls of the King.* 1837–42. Various residences : Epping, Tunbridge Wells, Boxley, etc.

1842. *Poems*, 2 vols. : much revision of old work, and much new. Wider recognition. Acquaintance with Carlyle.

1844–5. Loss of fortune through speculation. Dangerous ill-health and depression. 1845. Civil list pension, £200, from Sir Robert Peel.

1847. *The Princess* (first form).

1850. *In Memoriam. The Princess* (altered, and lyrics inserted).

1850. Marriage to Emily Sellwood. Laureateship, in succession to Wordsworth. Growing prosperity; wider fame.

1852. *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*

1853. To Farringford, Freshwater, Isle of Wight. 1853–92. Frequent travels: in Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Scandinavia, etc. 1855. D.C.L. at Oxford.

1854. Frederick Tennyson, *Days and Hours.*

1855. *Maud, and other Poems.* Hostile reception, and discouragement.

1857. *Enid and Nimuë*, privately printed. (1858. William Morris, *Defence of Guenevere* volume.) 1859. *Idylls of the King* (i.e. revised *Enid* and *Nimuë* (now *Vivien*), *Elaine* and *Guinevere*). Regained popularity.

1860. *Tithonus*, in *Cornhill* (written long before).

1862. Presentation to Queen Victoria.

1863. *Attempts at Classic Metres in Quantity* (in *Cornhill*).

1864. *Enoch Arden, and other Poems.* Charles Tennyson Turner, *Sonnets* (and more again in 1868 and 1873).

1868. To Blackdown, near Haslemere; Aldworth built.

1868. *Lucretius.* 1869. *The Holy Grail, and other Poems* (including eight *Idylls of the King*, three wholly new). 1871. *The Last Tournament.* 1872. *Gareth and Lynette.* Completion of *Idylls*, except for *Balin and Balan*, 1885.

1875–9. First dramas: 1875, *Queen Mary* (acted 1876 at Lyceum); 1876, *Harold*; 1879, *The Falcon* acted by Kendals.

1880. *Ballads and other Poems.* Charles Tennyson Turner, *Collected Sonnets, Old and New.*

1881. *The Cup*, produced at Lyceum by Irving. 1882. *The Promise of May* acted.

1883. Voyage with Gladstone to Denmark and Norway.

1884. Peerage: Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford.

1884. *Becket* (acted at Lyceum in 1893).

1885. *Tiresias and other Poems.* 1886. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, etc. 1888. Last recension of completed *Idylls of the King.* 1889. *Demeter and other Poems.*

1890. Frederick Tennyson, *The Isles of Greece*; and, 1891, *Daphne.*

1892. *The Foresters* (played in New York). *The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and other Poems* (posthumously published).

1892. Oct. 6, Death at Aldworth. Burial in Westminster Abbey.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

1822. Dec. 24, Matthew Arnold born at Laleham, near Staines; son of Dr. Thomas Arnold the historian (afterwards headmaster of Rugby), and of his wife Mary (born Penrose).

1837. Schooling at Rugby. 1841. Scholarship at Balliol. 1843. Newdigate prize poem, *Cromwell.* 1844. Graduation. 1845. Fellowship at Oriel; friendship with Arthur Hugh Clough.

1847–51. Private secretary to Lord Lansdowne.

1849. *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems, by A.* (withdrawn).

1851–86. Inspectorship of Schools, under Board of Education. 1851. Marriage to Frances Lucy Wightman.

1852. *Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems, by A.* (withdrawn).

1853. *Poems* (signed), including notable *Preface*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, and *The Scholar-Gipsy.* 1855. *Poems* (including *Balder Dead*).

1857–67. Professorship of Poetry at Oxford.

1858. *Merope, a Tragedy* (with *Preface*).

1860–88. Many works on educational topics, e.g.: 1861. *The Popular Education of France.* 1868. *Schools and Universities on the Continent.* Many Reports (1852–82) on popular education.

1861. *On Translating Homer* (lectures). 1862. *On Translating Homer: Last Words.*

1865. *Essays in Criticism* (first series).

1867. *New Poems* (including *Empedocles on Etna, Thyrsis, Rugby Chapel, Dover Beach*, etc.). Little poetry written henceforward. *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (lectures).

1869. *Culture and Anarchy.* 1871. *Friendship's Garland.*

1870–77. Theological works: 1870. *St. Paul and Protestantism.* 1872, 1875. *A Bible-Reading for Schools,* etc. (arrangements of the Book of Isaiah). 1873. *Literature and Dogma.* 1875. *God and the Bible.* 1877. *Last Essays on Church and Religion. Poems,* 'complete' edition.

1879. *Selected Poems of Wordsworth*; and, 1881, of *Byron.* 1879. *Mixed Essays.* 1881. *Geist's Grave. Essays in Criticism,* second series. 1882. *Irish Essays.*

1883. Civil list pension. First lecturing tour in America. 1886. Second tour.

1885. *Discourses in America.*

1885. April 15, death at the Dingle, Liverpool.

NOTES

TENNYSON

i. *Biography.* *Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a Memoir*, by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, 2 vols., 1897, and 1 vol., 1899, is the authorised record ; with the same writer's *Tennyson and his Friends*, 1911. See, too, the correspondence of Carlyle, FitzGerald, and Huxley ; A. C. Benson, *Life of Lord Tennyson*, 1904 ; and Sir Alfred Lyall, *Tennyson*, 1902.

ii. *Writings.* Many editions of the *Poetical Works* (including plays) : a convenient one in 1 vol. is published by Macmillans. A standard one, with notes by the poet, and edited by Hallam Lord Tennyson, is in 9 vols., 1907–8 ('Eversley' ed.). J. Churton Collins, *The Early Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, 1900 (i.e. to 1842 inclusive), throws much light on Tennyson's changes of text and on his sources. Editions of separate works are numerous. The best commentary (without text) on *In Memoriam* is by A. C. Bradley, 1901. A. E. Baker, *Concordance*, 1914.

iii. *Comment.* This is profuse, and almost every critic has spoken ; but the following books, lectures, or essays may be selected : Walter Bagehot, on *Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art*, in his *Literary Studies :* W. Macneile Dixon, *A Primer of Tennyson*, 1896 ; Andrew Lang, *Alfred Tennyson*, 1901 ; W. P. Ker, *Tennyson* (lecture), 1909 ; H. J. Grierson, *The Tennysons*, in *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, vol. xiii, ch. ii (1916). T. R. Lounsbury, *Life and Times of Tennyson (from 1809 to 1850)*, 1915, traces fully the early history of the poet's reputation. *The Building of the Idylls*, in W. Robertson Nicoll's and T. J. Wise's *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols., 1896 (in vol. ii), is a valuable study. See, too, *ib.*, *Tennysoniana*, etc.

p. 27, 'a living poet.' W. B. Yeats, *Discoveries*, 1907, p. 12.

p. 29, 'trance-experience.' See *Memoir*, 1899 ed., pp. 815–16,

for Tyndall's report of the poet's own experience, and of his words: 'By God Almighty, there is no delusion in the matter! It is no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendent wonder, associated with absolute clearness of mind.'

p. 49, 'metres.' See Saintsbury, *History of Eng. Prosody*, iii.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

i. *Biography.* Matthew Arnold did not wish his life to be written. There are his *Letters* (from 1848 to 1888), 2 vols., 1895, etc. collected and arranged by G. W. E. Russell; and sketches, with estimates, by G. Saintsbury, 1899; by H. W. Paul ('Eng. Men of Letters'), 1902; and by G. W. E. Russell, 1904.

ii. *Writings.* The fullest edition (*de luxe*) of the *Works*, both prose and verse, is in 15 vols., 1903–4, and includes bibliography by T. B. Smart and the *Letters* named above. *Poetical Works*, 1 vol., 1890, etc. The *Poems*, 1840–67, edited by Sir A. Quiller-Couch, 1909, do not contain the latest poems, but are in chronological order with textual variants, and include the important *Prefaces.* There is no collected edition of the prose works by themselves; but all the important ones are available singly; and there are various selections; e.g. the useful *Essays* (Oxford, 1914), with some new matter. Matthew Arnold's selections from Johnson, Wordsworth, and Byron, with his prefaces, are also current.

iii. *Comment.* Besides the regular histories of literature and the works named under (i) above, see A. C. Swinburne, in *Essays and Studies*, 1875; and G. Saintsbury, in *Corrected Impressions*, 1895 (reprint in *Collected Essays*, 3 vols., 1923, vol. i); in *Hist. of Criticism*, vol. iii, pp. 515 ff., and also in *Hist. of English Prosody*, vol. iii, 1904. Also T. S. Omond, *Arnold and Homer*, in *Essays and Studies of Eng. Association*, vol. iii, 1912.

Augsburg Seminary
Library

821.09 15280
T31E Elton

Tennyson and Mathew Arnold

821.09
T31E

15280

Augsburg Seminary
Library

08-DAP-454